GOD HAVE MERCY ON US !

WILLIAM T. SCANLON

Isel Staples,

God Have Mercy on Us!

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/godhavemercyonus0000will

GOD HAVE MERCY ON US!

A Story of 1918

BY

WILLIAM T. SCANLON

GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY WILLIAM T. SCANLON

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO REPRODUCE
THIS BOOK OR PARTS THEREOF IN ANY FORM

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

God Have Mercy on Us!

God Have Mercy on Us!

CHAPTER I

'*Finie la guerre! . . . Finie la guerre! . . .*'

The French soldiers came straggling along the road. They were coming south — toward Paris. We were hiking in the opposite direction — north. We hollered at them and beckoned for them to come on with us, but they shook their heads and waved their arms and shouted, pointing back the way they had come:

'*Finie la guerre! . . . Boches! . . . Boches! . . . Finie la guerre!*'

'They're yelling that the Germans are just up ahead and that the war's over.' This from Benvenuto, a 'music,' also known as 'The Wop.' But we knew what the French soldiers were saying just as well as he did, even if he was one of our interpreters.

Then our outfit started yelping — Calahan, Shiel, Conroy, Young, and the rest.

'For Christ's sake, don't tell me the war is over after all I've done to get here . . .'

'Jesus! when I think of all the drilling I put in at Quantico . . .'

'Quantico! . . . Hell — drilling was a pipe compared to what we did at Parris Island! . . . Say, I made most of that damned island myself . . .'

'The hell you did! I guess I was in that "Join the Marines and move the world" bunch, too . . .'

'Aw, pipe down on that bootcamp stuff! What gives me a pain in the neck is all the time we wasted up at Verdun in the old trenches when we might have been killing Krautheads . . .'

We were all sore. When they loaded us into camions at Chaumont-en-Vexin, we thought that at last we were going to see some real action. We were nuts about the camions. They looked like patrol wagons. They had two long seats inside, just like patrol wagons. The drivers were French-Indo-Chinamen. They never knew where they were going. They simply followed the camion ahead. The leading car had an officer in it who knew where the convoy was headed for.

By the time we reached Meaux, we were sure something must be doing. The town itself was in confusion. Furniture and bundles of bedclothes were piled in the streets and the people were standing everywhere in bunches gabbing away and waving their arms.

Then, after we left Meaux, we began to meet the refugees. They were moving toward Meaux in every imaginable style. An old man and woman would come trudging along with their belongings tied to their backs. There were people pushing baby carriages and wheelbarrows heaped high with clothes and pots and pans. Some had hayracks with all their stuff piled on and the family perched on top. Some had chickens and geese in crates tied underneath the wagons. There were droves of sheep and hogs. We were held up quite a while in front of a drove of hogs. They would not get off

the road. And there were slow-moving oxen-drawn wagons. Most of the women were crying.

When we got to Montreuil-aux-Lions, we unloaded from the camions and watched them drive off. We were assigned to billets in barns and told that we had better turn in and get some rest. But we were too excited and curious to go to sleep. From the looks of the town the people must have left it in a hurry. We had a fine time rooting around. We rummaged the houses over from cellar to garret. We found wine and cider and were warned not to eat or drink anything we found for fear of poison. We took a chance. Nobody got poisoned.

It was after twelve o'clock noon before we began to turn in. Some of the fellows went to sleep in the beds in the houses instead of the straw in the barns. I had just about got to sleep when the whistles began to blow and orders were shouted around to dress and fall in at once. We had been told that we were to rest until evening and it was now only one-thirty. But we didn't belly-ache very much. Something must be doing at last. We fell in and marched out of town, toward the northeast.

It was at the edge of this town, Montreuil-aux-Lions, that we began to meet the French soldiers. And they said that the war was over. Most of them carried packs, but few of them had rifles, and those that did have rifles were throwing them away.

After passing the first bunch of French soldiers, we were shoved over to the side of the road to let a string of camions go through us. They were loaded with soldiers dressed like us in regular army uniforms without any

distinguishing marks, and as they went by we yelled at them, 'What outfit?'

And they said, 'First Battalion, Sixth Marines.'

Then we *were* sore!

'Christ, can you beat that! . . . Part of our own outfit! . . . And they can ride in camions while we have to hike!'

We were so mad that when they hollered at us, 'What outfit?' we yelled back, 'Salvation Army!'

The camions were kicking up a lot of dust for us to swallow, which didn't make it any pleasanter.

Then the old song began again:

'We always get a bum break every place we go . . . Those birds will go ahead and pick out the best spots to billet and we will be shoved out in some woods . . .'

'The Third Battalion always gets a dirty deal . . . Every time we go anywhere, instead of riding all the way like the other outfits, we get shoved off forty kilometers away and then hike . . .'

'Well, you know Ma Sibling has to "harden up her boys." Going to bring them into action some day, she says . . .'

'All we do is hike — hike — forty or fifty kilo-Marines a day . . .'

'Well, I don't mind the hiking if we're really going to see some action . . .'

'Action, hell! I heard they were going to put all the Marines back on ship duty . . .'

The camions with the First Battalion had passed on and we were running into more French. Some were on horses, and we tried to wise crack them, but they did

not pay any attention to us. Another French soldier came along on foot, slowly. His coat sleeve was cut off and his arm was bandaged. The bandage was red.

'Wonder what happened to that guy . . .'

'He must have been cleaning his rifle and didn't know it was loaded.'

Then Lieutenant McElroy shouted, 'Close over on the right, men — and let these batteries go through . . .'

Two French 75s pulled by us, each drawn by a skinny horse. Farther along we came upon two more guns. The French were pulling them out of the bushes onto the road.

Captain Vare wheeled, 'Ninety-Seventh Company . . . Halt! . . .'

Major Sibling and his adjutant came down the road.

'Have your men fall out, Captain.' Then they talked together and Major Sibling indicated the woods on our left.

Wilmarth complained in a low voice: 'Didn't I tell you we rated some lousy woods to billet in? The other battalions got a town . . .'

Sure enough, in a few minutes we marched into the woods and were ordered to take off our packs. Right away we began to think of eats.

'I wonder if Nagel is in sight with the galley . . .'

'He's always pulling that old stuff that an army fights on its belly. He'd better furnish something to make a belly with or there won't be no fighting.'

Nagel and the galley always tailed along after us when we went on hikes, but we hadn't seen the cook or his grease-balls since we left Chaumont-en-Vexin.

'I hope he cooks up a mess of beans,' hoped Conroy.

Young looked disgusted. 'Beans! Ye gods, not beans! While you're hoping, please hope for steaks . . .'

'Speaking of steaks,' said Stanley, 'there are a couple of cows out there in the field. Let's coax them in . . .'

'Got any chewing, Nap?' asked Wilmarth, the man who chewed. 'I've got a whole carton of Beechnut coming from home. As soon as it gets here, I'll split up with you.'

I gave him a chew, but I knew he had already traded that promised carton for a carload of real chewing tobacco.

It was nearly dark and we were hungry. I looked up Sergeant Barnes and asked if there was any chow in sight, but he didn't know of any. Then I saw Lieutenant McElroy coming through the trees, so I asked him.

'The men will have to eat from their reserve rations,' he said. 'Let them start a small fire to cook their bacon, but be sure that they use dry sticks, Corporal, as there must not be any smoke.'

I went back to the squad and told them to break out their reserve rations. It was the first time we had ever used our reserve rations. We started a fire and cooked bacon in our mess kits. Several of us used the same pan, and when we got through there was quite a lot of hot grease. The hardtack was dry and tasteless, so I took a couple of chunks and put them into the grease and let them stew up a bit. Then I fished them out and bit off a piece. It tasted swell — something like pie crust when it is cooked by itself without any filling. The other fellows in my squad tried the same stunt and liked it

too. I told Bendow in the next squad to try the hardtack-bacon-grease combination. He did, and soon his bunch were all doing it. He told Manley, and so the receipt for the new dish went down the line. I thought I ought to get a patent on this.

After we had finished eating and had put out our fires, Lieutenant McElroy came along and stopped to talk with us. When he was leaving he said, 'If you fellows are cooking any bacon, save the grease and heat your hardtack in it. It makes the hardtack taste better.'

Young looked at me, and as soon as McElroy went away, he said, 'Leave it to the officers to steal the credit.'

Stanley and Dale strolled out to the end of the woods and began talking to one of the cows. She seemed very sociable and willing to have company.

Dale came back to me. 'That cow needs milking. Her bag is ready to bust. Is it all right to milk her?'

'Sure, go ahead if you know how.'

He got out his canteen and went back to the cow. Stanley held the cup and Dale trained the stream of milk into it. Once in a while he would miss the cup and the milk would squirt in Stanley's face. When that cup was full, I brought my cup, and before we got through the whole squad had a cup of warm milk. Dale was the official milker. Then Fried's squad got jealous, so the other cow was brought over and they milked her. The cows didn't seem to mind. They wanted to stay near us. They looked lonely and forlorn and they

mooed very softly, their big mournful eyes fixed on us, as if they wanted to tell us something.

This was the nicest place we had been in for some time. Everything seemed pleasant, and now that we had our own cows, we were contented to stay. Some of the fellows had unrolled their packs and were stretched out in blankets for the night.

Suddenly the captain's voice rang out, 'Ninety-Seventh Company! Fall in with all equipment.'

Luckily none of my squad had unrolled their packs. All we had to do was sling packs and we were ready to go.

Lieutenant McElroy passed down the line, saying, 'Our company is forming up ahead at the edge of the woods. Move up as soon as you are ready.'

The company lined up and we saw the Top Kicker, Sergeant Kuhns, standing in front with a sheet of paper in his hand.

'Ninety-Seventh Company . . . Attention! Answer your name to the roll call. Gunnery sergeants — Davidson!'

'Here.'

'Hartley . . .'

'Here.'

'Strohm . . .'

'Here.'

Kuhns had finished the sergeants and had got into the corporals when there was a sudden whizzing sound overhead, and the next minute *whang* — *whang* — two shells busted close in our rear. We were standing at attention, but the sudden explosions took a lot of the stiffness out of us.

Then more shells crashed . . . to our right . . . to our left, and even out in front in the open space.

Kuhns stopped calling off names and looked at Captain Vare.

'Have the platoon sergeants report direct . . .' ordered the captain.

'Platoon sergeants, report . . .' Kuhns spoke hurriedly.

Strohm, our sergeant, comes from the rear and takes his position in front of the platoon.

A shell hits a pile of cordwood in front of us, scattering it in all directions. Strohm jumps. Kuhns looks worried.

Captain Vare shouts, 'Drop back into the woods, but hold your ranks . . .'

We back up into the woods. Strohm finally finds his voice, 'Squad leaders, report!'

All of us corporals report in turn, 'All present.'

In the woods all around us the shells are crashing heavily.

Corporal Benvenuto is standing a short distance from me. His hand is on his bugle. '*Finie la guerre* — hell! . . . It's only just begun . . .'

The words are hardly out of his mouth when a shell bursts within a few feet of him. He is hit. There is a look of strange surprise on his face as he falls to the ground.

Everybody starts yelling: 'Wounded man on the right! . . . Hospital Corps men! . . . Hospital Corps men! . . .'

First down of the Ninety-Seventh Company.

CHAPTER II

NINETY-SEVENTH COMPANY will move up at once in support of the First Battalion at Triangle Farm . . .'

The runner was all out of breath.

Captain Vare shouted, 'Ninety-Seventh Company! . . . Forward . . . on the double!'

We swung out of the woods onto the road and headed in the direction of the firing. Now we could hear heavy rifle and machine-gun fire.

The rapid pace made our heavy packs bounce up and down on our backs and knocked the wind out of us.

This bunch of white buildings must be Triangle Farm . . . We are breathless as we reach the oblong courtyard. The shells have been passing overhead, but now they are crashing into the farm buildings. We take up positions in an orchard to the right of them.

The First Platoon is ordered forward. Lieutenant McElroy, accompanied by a runner, leads the way — down a little valley and up a hill. We stop and lie down. The firing is close up now.

Corporal Manley and his squad creep forward. Then Corporal Fried with the second squad . . . Bendow and the third, and now me and the fourth . . .

'Follow the runner . . .' shouts Lieutenant McElroy. 'Keep close to the ground. . . . Have your men take up positions between the men on the line. . . . Let them use their packs as shields . . .'

The runner goes forward on his hands and knees. I follow. Behind me, one after the other, come the other seven men of the squad. We creep closer to the crest of the hill. The runner stops and points ahead.

'There are the men . . . just up ahead . . . lying down . . .'

Taking the first four men — Young, Dale, Conroy, and Corbet, I crawl forward. The man up ahead turns his head as we come up, but he doesn't say anything. I locate the man next to him — about five yards away — and Young crawls into the space between them. I place each man and go back for the other three — Gravenstone, Wilmarth, and Knapp, and bring them up. I pass on the lieutenant's order for each man to take off his pack and place it before him, also to put his gas mask at the alert position.

The line here seems fairly quiet. There is heavy firing on the left.

Taking up a position near the first man, I ask, 'What outfit are you fellows with?'

'First Battalion, Sixth Marines.'

'Are the French up ahead?'

'The French! Hell, the French must be in Paris by this time at the rate they were going . . .'

On the top of the hill ahead, dimly outlined against the sky, I am sure I see shadowy forms moving.

'Then what is that outfit up ahead?' I ask.

'The Germans . . .'

CHAPTER III

'STRETCHER-BEARERS on the right!'

'Pass the word along! . . . Pass the word along! . . . Hospital Corps men on the right! . . .'

'Who got hit?'

'Manley is hit . . . Johnny Aspinwall is down . . . Spike Shannon is hit . . .'

(Christ, our own bunch!)

'Are they hit bad?'

'Manley is dead . . .'

The air is filled with cries . . .

'Stretcher-bearers on the right! . . .'

'Hospital Corps men! . . . Hospital Corps men! . . .'

'Where the hell are those God damned Hospital Corps men? . . .'

'Jesus, we've come only two hundred yards and there's men down all over the field! . . .'

The Germans are meeting our advance with heavy machine-gun fire. The bullets twang overhead. Their artillery has not swung into line yet, as our attack has been sudden.

We are in the fourth wave. We are advancing by rushes of fifteen yards at a time, then down. Ahead of us in the next wave is a sergeant with a whistle. One blast, rush forward. Two blasts, down. Our movements are guided by him.

We're damn fine targets at eight o'clock in the morning of a clear June day with a bright hot sun. Orders

are passed from the rear to keep bayonets down, as they are flashing in the sun.

The field we are crossing has growing wheat about knee high. When the men are lying down, they cannot be seen. One man from each group stands up all the time as a guide post. Stanley, on my left, is guide for our group.

Belleau Wood lies about four hundred yards to the left. There is another wood on our right about a thousand yards away. Some distance in front we can see the white walls and houses of a town — Bouresches.

Both our flanks are under heavy machine-gun fire, but my group in the center is, for the moment, getting by in good shape. We hold a perfect line. I order Corbet, the fellow from Mississippi, to get back in line. He is advancing too fast.

But the German artillery now finds our range and begins firing point-blank at us. The noise and constant explosions are numbing. I move along dumbly. I stumble over a man lying face down. He doesn't move. The waves of men in front of us have disappeared. We are the front wave now.

The wheat ends. A sort of knoll with a gradual slope is just ahead of me. I creep up toward the top. Looking back to my right, I see other men crawling up. I pick out Dale, Knapp, and Corbet, all from my own group. We crawl over the knoll. Beyond is just flat, unplanted land. No valley or depression. It looks desolate. I keep my face well in the ground while the machine-gun bullets peck around me.

Turning my head to the left, I see Captain Vare

come walking along as if there wasn't any bursting shells or machine-gun bullets flying everywhere. He pauses near me. Lieutenant Marr's dog is with him. When a bullet hits near him, the crazy dog runs over and tries to dig it up with his paws. Then he runs back and jumps up at the captain's hand. The captain says, 'Down!'

They come closer to where I am lying and Captain Vare says, 'You'll never see what's going on with your nose stuck in the ground.'

I don't answer. I am seeing more now than I want to.

Red Cullen is lying a short distance to my left. His face is toward me. He looks as if he is sweating blood.

Back of me somewhere I can hear Wilmarth calling to some one, 'Gimme a chew, will you? . . . Hey, gimme a chew . . .'

Captain Vare shouts, 'Ninety-Seventh Company, forward by rushes!'

We make two advances, about thirty yards. Each time the machine guns seem to concentrate on us. The town of Bouresches now lies about three hundred yards ahead of us. I holler at the captain, 'How far do you want us to rush?'

But he doesn't hear me. Soon I hear him again, 'Automatic rifles on the left!'

The two automatic riflemen from my group start across — Knapp and Cullen. Both are hit before reaching the woods.

The artillery fire and machine-gun fire get hotter all

the time. I can see men lying about, but I don't know whether they are living or dead. The air is heavy with picric-acid fumes from the high-explosive shells. I can't tell whether gas is mixed with it or not. Some of the men are putting on their masks.

Again I hear Wilmarth begging for a chew. I wish I had a chew myself.

The spot I am lying in now is fully exposed . . . No wheat . . . nothing to screen me . . . I am lying flat, face down, my nose almost buried, with my arms close to my sides . . . I am wishing I was thinner. . . . My gas mask seems to push me away up in the air . . . I shall be hit now any second . . . I bargain with myself as to what part of my body I will sacrifice . . . My head feels safe . . . I have the helmet on it . . . I pull it down over my eyes more as every now and then a machine-gun bullet hits in front of me and kicks dirt in my face and eyes . . . I consider which part of me I can best let get hit . . . My right arm should not be sacrificed, as I use it the most . . . No, I'll have to let my left arm get it . . . I squirm around, throwing my left side forward . . . Hell! no, my heart is on the left side! . . . I squirm back . . . My legs are exposed . . . Can I spare my legs? . . . My thoughts go back to dancing at White City . . . The big dance hall . . . the lights, the music, the girls . . . Louise sure could two-step . . . Vi was light on her feet . . . but Mamie had them all skinned for waltzing . . . Never to dance again! . . . No, I can't let my legs go . . .

A shell strikes about twenty feet away and makes a direct hit on Gould. His body goes up in the air like the

roots of a blasted tree. I can pick out his legs, arms, and body. My eyes seem fixed and follow the upward movement and watch the parts coming down. Bits fall on me. It is the first direct hit I have seen.

My position is hopeless now . . . I must pray . . . I cannot get my hand up to bless myself . . . I start with 'Our Father,' but it does not seem to fit the case . . . 'Hail Marys' seem too tame . . . the 'Creed' seems long and complicated . . . I must have something that has a direct bearing on the position I am in . . . I can't take chances now . . . I finally get down to 'God have mercy on me!' . . . That's better . . . I say it over and over . . . I look around and see the other fellows . . . My prayer sounds selfish . . . I change it to 'God have mercy on us!' . . . I say it hard . . . I want God to know I mean it . . . I feel guilty . . . I haven't prayed for a long time . . . Maybe He won't think I rate protection, asking for it under such circumstances . . . Maybe He'll think I'm trying to sneak in at the last minute . . . Whatever He thinks . . . I want out . . .

Ting-ting, a machine-gun bullet kicks some small stones up against my helmet. I quit arguing with God and go back to my prayer. I want out! . . .

Behind me I hear Wilmarth again. He's calling to me now.

'Throw me over a chew, will you, Nap?'

Don't that guy know there's a war going on?

Then Captain Vare shouts, 'Ninety-Seventh Company, take the town!'

I don't want to get up, but I force myself. I see other figures move. We are just starting forward when

Major Sibling's voice comes to us, clear across the field from the woods: 'Ninety-Seventh Company, stand fast!'

Orders are passed along to dig in and hold what we have. I am on an unploughed patch. About ten yards to my right front runs a furrow, the last one that was ploughed, which leaves a fair-sized trench. I creep over to this and start scooping out the soft dirt with my hands to make a hole deep enough to get into. Soon Stanley comes up and picks another spot. Bretherton, Dale, Hancock, Corbet, and some more come across the ploughed part from the right and they all dig in around me. We talk a little and dig a lot. We are in good spirits. The tension is gone. We feel safe, although the shelling is still very heavy. But we are doing something.

It is mid-afternoon now, but almost dark on account of the dust, smoke, and gas from the heavy shelling. Several planes are circling around over the field. They are flying low and they have black crosses underneath. They cannot see us very well on account of the heavy mist of smoke that hangs over us. But they do not cheer us up much, especially when they open up with their machine guns.

After they pass I see something come creeping toward us from the left. As it draws nearer, I see that it is one of our men crawling on his knees, using one hand as a support. The other hand is up to his face. He is dirty and bloody. I think I recognize him and call out,

'Is that you, Wilmarth?'

He tries to speak, but can't. He is shot through the lower part of the face and is holding his jaw up. I tell Stanley to take him back to the first-aid station.

As he leaves, Stanley says, 'God, that's a tough break for Wilmarth.'

And I am thinking, he won't be bumming any chew for a while.

CHAPTER IV

AROUND five o'clock Lieutenant McElroy and Corporal Bendow came up to us. My group was now the farthest advanced of any of those out in the open. McElroy told me that the Ninety-Sixth Company was in the town and that we would enter just as soon as it grew darker.

About an hour later I heard him and the rest of the platoon coming, so I got my men together and we trailed into town. On the outskirts of town there was a big barn-like structure. Here the remains of our company gathered and we had a regular family get-together affair. Before this battle we were simply so many squads and platoons, but now it was different. We went around shaking hands with one another like long-lost brothers. The company had been formed nearly a year, but this was the first time we had had a handshaking party. We sure were glad to see one another.

It was:

'Hello, Young! . . .'

'Hello, Getty! . . .'

'How did you like it, Bowen? . . . '

'The "Whitestone Herald" will hear about this, hey, Carney? . . .'

'I'll tell the world it will . . .'

'Ma Sibling's voice sure sounded sweet to me today . . .'

'Say, Rogan, was Shannon hit very hard? . . .'

Then the search began for those who were not there.

'Is Leighton here? . . .'

'Where's Fat Baumgartner? . . .'

'Did you see Corey? . . .'

'Anybody see young Shiel? . . .'

There were lots of these questions, but there were no answers. Everybody was asking for somebody else, but the somebody else was missing. The field in our rear was now in inky blackness. It held the somebody elses.

'Got a cigarette? . . .'

Several matches were struck.

'Hey, put out those lights. Do you want us all to get killed?'

'Aw, hell, they know we're here . . .'

There was a commotion over on the left where a road led into town. Several of the fellows ran over. Soon they came back.

Young: 'What was all the noise, Conny?'

Conroy: 'Lieutenant Marr just pulled into town with a load of ammunition . . .'

Fried: 'Did you see that damned dog of Marr's trying to scratch up bullets out on that field?'

Young: 'Yes, and the dog was killed later on . . .'

Fried: 'Poor pup! . . . It was no place for a dog . . .'

Just then I heard some one say, 'Hello, Spud!'

I looked over, and sure enough there was Spud Murphy himself. He had an overseas cap on his head and a heavy pack on his back. All we had were combat

packs. We hadn't seen Murphy since we left the old trenches at Verdun.

Me: 'Hello, Spud. Where did you come from?'

Spud: 'Just got back from the school at Gondrecourt.'

Me: 'You picked out a good day to come home. How did you find us?'

Spud: 'I met a battalion runner and he pointed out that field and said the company was somewhere in Bouresches.'

Me: 'Where's your helmet?'

Spud: 'Haven't got any. I'll get one before the night's over.'

We now heard Lieutenant McElroy calling — for the First Platoon to form over on the right. He led us over to a yard and told us to dig in until morning.

Young, Conroy, and I happened to have spots near each other. Conroy was the only one of us that had a shovel. Young and I were using the tops of our mess kits. When Conroy was down a little way, I told him that was deep enough. He lay down in it to show me it wasn't. Young picked up his shovel and started to use it and talked Conroy into using the mess kit cover for a while. Conroy kept looking over at Young's hole and saying, 'Your hole is deeper than mine now.'

Then Young let me take the shovel and Conroy went over to prove to Young that Young's hole was deeper than his. I was busy shoveling away. Conroy came back and let out a yelp. I had filled up his hole with the dirt from mine. I gave him back his shovel.

An outfit in close formation came tramping across our lot and we had a hard time keeping them out of our holes. They had big shovels strapped to their backs. They were Second Division Engineers. They kept right on going.

All this time Conroy had been working on his hole, and he sure had a dandy. Just about the time he had it all trimmed up to suit him, orders came for us to fall in and we had to hike across the town to the other side.

Lieutenant McElroy put me in charge of twenty-five men to guard the north approach to town. A stone wall ran along this edge of town for about one hundred and fifty feet. I placed the men along this wall.

Conroy and Gravenstone I stationed in a building that looked like a hencoop. They had a direct line of fire down a street that came in from the north. Extending south from the chicken-coop was a house, then a high stone wall. We broke a hole through this wall to give us entrance to a courtyard beyond. Joe Getty was placed on guard at this hole. Another high stone wall ran along our rear. There was a door in it that opened up into a street. Big Marvin was placed there. A building and a wall were on our left. No guard was placed on this side, as a bunch of the engineers were stationed on the other side of that wall. Every other man was to stand guard while the man next to him rested. But no one was to leave his position. They were to change every hour.

The Germans were sending up a few star shells which brought out the black masses of trees in the distance. Once in a while short bursts of machine-gun

fire would come in from their line. They seemed nervous.

I sat down between Dale and Young and leaned against the wall. I must have dropped off to sleep. I woke with a start. Dale was pulling at my gas-mask bag.

'Hey, Nap, Nap! Look, something is moving out in front . . .'

I got up and looked over the wall. It took my eyes a few seconds to get accustomed to the darkness. Dale was firing by this time. In fact the whole line seemed to open up at the same time.

There were Germans out there all right, but it was hard to say how many there were or to tell how far from us they were. A star shell went up and we got a view of the field in front. We were on a rise of land which sloped gradually away into the wood. The advancing Germans were arranged in depth. It resembled a checker-board formation. They, like ourselves, I suppose, were trained to remain stationary when a star shell went up. Before the light died down, the men in front of us were down also.

I got up and walked down the line in back of the men. Every one of them was working the old bolt handle for all he was worth.

The Germans must be attacking on the east side of town also, as the sound of heavy firing comes from that direction.

I listen for the sound of the Chaut-Chaut automatic rifles that I placed on the left flank. The Chaut-Chaut has a distinctive *put-put* sound all its own. I don't hear it, so I hurry over.

'What's the matter with the Chaut-Chaut, Monson?'

'It's hot and it sticks . . .'

'Work it in bursts of five from now on. We've got 'em pretty well stopped . . .'

There was a crashing of grenades on the right, so I ran over to see what was doing. Grenades meant the enemy was closing in on us — at least to throwing distance. Reaching the last man, I discovered the grenades were being hurled by another bunch of our men across the road. I tried to get across this road to see if they were hard-pressed, but there was such a steady stream of bullets coming from the chicken-coop where Conroy and Gravenstone were located that I couldn't make the other side. I knew they had only rifles, but it sounded like machine guns. I asked Conroy afterwards how they kept up such a steady fire. All they had were two rifles. He told me Gravenstone loaded the rifles and he did the firing.

The fire from the field in front of us had dwindled down to a few shots now and then, so I pulled Dad Gum Allen and Bretherton away from the wall and gave them positions on the right flank so they could watch the road in case the Germans broke through.

Lieutenant McElroy had just come through the hole. 'The Germans are falling back on the east side and probably on the north side also,' he said, 'but have your men keep up their fire for a while even if they don't see anything . . .'

McElroy went through to the other side where the engineers were and I went over to the stone wall and

told the fellows to keep up a steady fire. Shortly afterwards I heard Captain Vare's voice shouting,

'Cease firing!'

The attack had lasted an hour.

Murphy came through from the courtyard and he was still wearing the overseas cap. He had been assigned to the east side of town.

Me: 'How did your bunch make out, Spud?'

Spud: 'All right. Some of the fellows got nicked from flying pieces of stone from the building, but nobody gave up their helmets . . . Any vacant helmets over here? . . .'

Me: 'No. None of my men were hit . . .'

Murphy: 'Fried got all shot up around the legs by our own fire . . .'

'The hell he did! . . . How did that happen? . . .'

'He was in a building near the courtyard. During the attack one of his men who was in a building across from him, hollered for some grenades. Fried started over and had to cross the road running down to the railroad station. One of our machine-gun outfits had a gun trained down this road and Fried was caught in their fire. . . . I guess they had a hell of a time getting him out from under the fire . . . Well, Nap, if you see any loose helmets, save me one . . .'

Corporal Fried was a tall, rangy fellow from Texas. He was nicknamed 'Le Grand Caporal.' I was named 'Le Petit Caporal,' or Napoleon — Nap for short. Our christening took place at Tours amid very pleasant surroundings with lots of good liquor. Young was the christener and Spud Murphy was the godfather.

CHAPTER V

THE rest of the night was quiet. When morning broke, we found about fifty dead Germans out in front of our positions. We were beginning to even up the score for the day before.

There wasn't much doing that morning, so I scouted around and looked over the town. Some of the buildings were in ruins, but a number were in fairly good condition. In one building I came across some chickens that had been freshly killed and cleaned. Remembering the standing orders not to touch any food found in deserted towns, I left them alone.

I went into one house that hadn't been touched by shell fire. All the furniture was still there and there were pictures hanging on the walls. It was nice and clean and homelike. Even the beds were all made up. On one table I found a bunch of letters that had apparently arrived very recently. I could make out enough of the French to read that they were from the son of the family. He had lost a leg in battle and was now in a hospital. He was telling them about his war experiences and how he hoped to be home soon. The letters struck me as rather peculiar, as here was the war right in his own home.

We were still billeted in the garden along the stone wall, and I thought it would be a good idea to take one of the mattresses and some of the bedding over to my garden and make myself a nice little nest. So I loaded

up all I could carry from one of the bedrooms and was just leaving when an old French man and woman came in the door.

They looked at me quite surprised and the old lady kind of laughed and said, 'Come? . . .'

I said, 'Oh, is this your house?'

Of course they didn't understand me, so I put down the stuff and tried to 'parlay' with them — using what French I could and signs for the rest.

It seems this was their home and they had lived here all through the German drive. Not only that, but they had stuck through the siege in 1914 too — yes, and one during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. They were always being ordered to get out, but they wouldn't go. The old lady talked a blue streak, lifting her shoulders and waving her hands all the time she talked and laughing as if it was all a big joke. She was as lively as a cricket, but the old man was very quiet.

I put the bedding back where I got it and explained that I had thought the house was deserted. The old lady tried to make me keep the stuff, but I wouldn't take it. Then, when I was leaving, she brought out a pair of fancy red-and-yellow bedroom slippers and forced them into my hand, so I took them.

The French couple had a dandy garden. They must have been working out in the garden while I was rummaging around in their house. It made my mouth water when I saw some of the things growing in that garden. We hadn't had a real square meal for days. I got a hunch. There must be other gardens belonging to the deserted houses.

I left the old folks and went back to my garden by the wall. We had trampled most of it down the night before, but after a little search I found a nice patch of potatoes. They were very young, about the size of big marbles. From three plants I got a good panful. The green onions were just a nice size, too, so I pulled a bunch of them. There were quite a few asparagus stalks up, so I cut the longest of them and took them along. I was wishing Nagel was there. With a little meat he sure could have fixed up a swell stew. But he wasn't there. We hadn't seen anything of our galley yet, so we were still living on our reserve rations.

I went into one of the deserted French houses and started a fire in the grate. I was used to cooking over an open fire outdoors, so this seemed real handy by comparison. I cooked my bacon first, which left a fine lot of grease. Into this grease I put the potatoes, whole — I washed them first. The asparagus had me puzzled for a while. I didn't know how it should be cooked. But the rest of the food was fried, so why not the asparagus? So I cut it down to where it would lie in the pan, throwing away the top part, and put it on to cook. I cooked it a long time. At last it began to brown up in spots, so I figured it must be done. I put the potatoes and bacon back in the pan with the asparagus and went outside to eat. They had begun to shell the town again and I felt safer outside.

Several of us who had coffee had pooled it together and it was being cooked in another house. It was all ready by the time I finished my cooking, so I had a complete course dinner. But the asparagus did not

turn out so well. It had shriveled up and was very limp, but it sure had great hold-together strength. You could not bite a piece off. I rolled a length up and put it in my mouth and chewed and chewed, but could make no impression on it. It was as tough as slough grass.

I finally gave it up as a bad job. I felt rather disappointed, as I had carefully concealed it as a real delicacy, so the other fellows wouldn't see it and get the 'gimmes.'

I was just figuring out how I should have cooked it when all of a sudden a rabbit came bounding over the wall. Close behind the rabbit came Captain Vare at full speed.

'Catch him!' he hollered, but the rabbit had reached the other side.

The captain ran after him a little way and then came back to where I was sitting. He looked down at my pan and said, 'What's those round things?'

I said, 'Young potatoes.'

'Where did you get them?' At the same time he had his hand out for one. I gave him one on the fork and pointed with my other hand, 'Over in that garden.'

He said, 'They are all right.' Then he said, 'What's that green stuff in the bottom of the pan?'

I said, 'Fried asparagus.'

He bent over closer and said, 'How is it?'

I said, 'Not bad if you've got good teeth and like the taste.'

He hesitated a minute, but I guess it didn't look very inviting. He walked away.

Soon along came Bill Jarvis, the captain's acting dog-robber. He had a basket in his hand. He came over to me and said, 'Are you the corporal that had the small potatoes that the captain just saw?'

I said yes.

He said: 'Where do you get them? The captain is raving about them and wants a lot. All I've been doing ever since we got into this town is frying chickens and running down rabbits. Now it's digging potatoes. If you see anything else around that can be eaten, don't let the captain know it.'

'Where did you get your chickens?'

'We found some already cleaned in a building. The captain looked them over and said, "Fry them up" . . . Him and the lieuts are eating them . . . but I got mine . . .'

'They don't seem to be afraid of getting poisoned.'

'Poisoned, hell! . . . That's only a stall so you fellows will leave the food alone so the officers can get it. . . . Why, say, do you know what? . . .'

'What?'

'Last night when we first got into town we found some food cooking on a stove — potatoes and steak — and the table all set for a meal. The Germans left so fast they didn't have time to eat. The captain and three of the lieutenants sat down at the table and I served them the German food. . . . They're still alive and looking for more . . . And I guess I'd better get those potatoes . . .'

I pointed to where the potatoes were growing and gave him a shovel. He went to it and got quite a mess.

The Germans were still close to Bouresches, especially around the Bouresches railroad station, which was about a fourth of a kilometer from the town proper. We had men stationed in the tops of the buildings to shoot any Germans that showed up around the station. Outside of sniping we did very little shooting. Dale came around that afternoon holding up one finger. He had sniped himself a German.

There was a fountain down the street in a sort of public square. This was the only place where we could get water. The Germans had it under observation and kept a machine gun playing on it all the time. Using the stones from the wrecked buildings, we erected a low barricade along the east front of the fountain. Then, by crawling out on our hands and knees along this barricade, we could dip the water from the trough below where the horses used to drink. The water flowed out above from the mouths of iron faces.

The Germans shelled the town off and on all day.

McElroy told me I'd better go over and order the old French couple out. I went to the house and told them they'd have to get out. The old lady smiled and shrugged her shoulders and let loose a quick string of French. I could catch 'le bon Dieu' in it here and there and she pointed to the crucifix a couple of times. I kept saying, 'Alley — tootsweet!' and pointing to where the shells were coming from, but she just shook her head and the old man said over and over, 'Non . . . Non . . .'

So I left them and went back to my stone wall.

Along toward evening I met Calahan of the Third

Platoon coming back from the fountain with a canteen of water.

'Hello, Calahan,' I said, 'did you see anything of that old French couple?'

Calahan stopped. 'I did, and I don't want to see another sight like it.'

'What do you mean?'

'Well, they wouldn't get out of town. Vare even offered them an escort, but no, they wanted to stay, and stay they will! A shell crashed in front of their house and the old woman lies there crushed to death under stones from her own house. She is still holding her crucifix. The old man hanged himself over her body. Murphy just cut down the old man's body. If you hurry you can see the whole thing . . .'

But I crawled back through the hole leading into my garden and lay down.

CHAPTER VI

As the night came on, the men took up their positions along the stone wall and in the chicken-coop. The Germans furnished the regular nightly programme of star shells, bursts of machine-gun fire, and shells. From the northwest came the sound of a heavy artillery barrage. Now and then the roar of rifle and machine-gun fire could be heard. But we felt secure in our garden.

Near midnight Lieutenant McElroy came over and told me to have the men ready to move out at a moment's notice. A line of men came in through the opening on the left of the town and McElroy pointed to them, saying: 'Have our men open up with a heavy fire and keep it up for five minutes. Then we leave. These engineers are to take our places.'

Our men turned to and gave the German lines a snappy farewell. We wanted them to know that we were still there. We raised hell for five minutes, then lined up and marched out of the gate, and swung onto a road leading northwest out of Bouresches. The heavy firing in the northwest still continued.

The rest of the night we spent hiking, first in one direction, then in another. We twisted and turned, now headed north, now west. The sound of firing came more from the north now. At one place we took up positions along the road as if in readiness to make an attack. The rifle fire was heavy at this time.

Gradually it died away. Then we heard short bursts as if some outfit was making a dying effort to reach some place or to repel an advance. Soon it was quiet. We moved on again.

Day was breaking when we reached the outskirts of the wrecked and gas-filled town of Lucy-le-Bocage. It was necessary to put on our masks and that made traveling more miserable.

A little way out of town we entered a ravine which ran along the southern edge of Belleau Wood. Here we stopped and took off our masks. Farther along was the remnant of a food dump. There were a few cans of bully beef, goldfish, and beans lying around, and these were quickly snatched up.

The ravine ran a crooked course, and at places was blocked with fallen trees and broken branches. At these places we had to climb out and walk along the bank. Over on our right lay the field we had crossed in taking Bouresches. The wheat was still lying flat. A mist hung over it.

The ravine got deeper and widened out. The bank on the north side rose above our heads. Here we came upon a first-aid station. The hospital-corps men were working on a bunch of wounded men. They must have been in last night's attack. Along the inner bank, piled one on top of the other, were the dead. No covering. Still dirty and bloody — just the way they were when dragged in off the field. Some of them I could recognize . . . fellows from my own platoon . . . There's young Marks . . . There's Stanwix . . .

We were growling about the long hike and about

having no food and no sleep and various other things until we got to this spot. Then we became silent and passed on in silence. No one said anything for a long time.

We came to a halt at last and sat down along the inner bank of the ravine. Up above us in the woods proper another battalion was taking up positions for an attack. Word was passed back for the Ninety-Seventh Company to dig in along the ravine. We were to be in support of the attacking battalion.

Young and I and five or six fellows from another company were sitting on some big boulders that were out in the middle of the ravine. We were telling each other what a rough time we had had. Finally Young and I decided it was time to get busy and dig in. There were several shallow holes close by, but they did not look good to us, so we passed them up and picked out a spot farther up where the bank was good and steep. Both of us had shovels this time and we burrowed right in.

I made my hole so that I could sit up in it with the bank as a sort of canopy above. It took a lot of digging to reach the solid part of the bank, as all the loose dirt that had sifted down had to be cleared away. It was a skimpy hole. It would hold one man and that was all. Even then I had to draw my feet up like a tailor and bend my head a little forward.

I was sitting in the hole trying to figure out how I could enlarge it with the least effort to make it more comfortable. It was wide enough, but my knees stuck out. I would have to dig back farther into the bank.

Then perhaps I could scoop out a small part above for my head to fit into. I took off my helmet and laid it across my knees and stomach to see if that would permit my head to go back . . .

Just then it seemed as if the earth stopped dead, but things kept on moving. From out of the sky like a cloudburst came a downpour of shells. The Germans must have got wind of the coming attack and were laying down a most terrific barrage to bust it up.

The troops in the woods up above were in a panic. They had massed up. Now they came flying down into the ravine for protection. At once the shelling seemed to concentrate on the ravine. It became a wild mass of men scrambling and ducking, trying to get away from the shells. The shelling grew worse and worse. It was like being in a terrible thunderstorm. The trees crashed and there was a continuous roar like heavy winds. The shells hit, and the dirt and rocks flew up in the air. The men were running blindly. Some would crawl in among the rocks to hide.

Two men come plunging into the shallow hole on my left . . .

One yells, 'Gimme that God damned hole . . .'

There is a struggle. The other man lands back in the ravine on his back as though pushed very forcibly. His hands and feet wave in the air a moment. His right hand still grasps his rifle with bayonet bared. He rises with a bound and races for the hole with his rifle stretched before him. He lunges forward with all his strength. The impact causes him to stagger back. He falls among the rocks and lies still.

Suddenly another fellow comes plunging head first into my hole. My helmet is still over my stomach. His helmet strikes mine with a crash. He tries to bore in, his feet going like the dickens as if he were on a treadmill. The helmets grind together and cut into my legs. I push at him and holler, 'No room!... Get out!... Get out!...'

At the same time a fellow tries to plunge into Young's hole, next to mine, and Young pushes him out too. They try to get shelter among the rocks where the other man is lying. A shell strikes those rocks with a blinding flash and seems to splatter the three men right into the rocks. The rocks split open and blood runs down their sides. The rocks are crushed. The men are gone. It seems to rain blood. Drops of blood like red rain fall about my hole. And I see legs and helmets. I sit stunned.

The barrage stopped as suddenly as it began. Usually there are stray shells that fall after the regular barrage, but to-day the shelling just stopped. It lasted not more than fifteen minutes.

'Nap!... Oh, Nap!...'

It was Young's voice calling me. My head felt numb. It was bent forward when I sat down in the hole. Now it was straight up. It had bored itself into the dirt above without my knowing it.

I slid forward in the hole a little so as to get my head free and then bent over to put my helmet on. I stuck my head out of the hole and Young had his head out looking my way.

Young: 'Are you all right?'

'Yes, are you?'

Young: 'Yes . . . This certainly was the worst yet.'

'Yes, it was bad, but look over here' — motioning to the shallow hole on my left — 'here's something still worse . . .'

We got out of our holes. My legs were stiff.

The man in the shallow hole was pinned to the earth. The bayonet had penetrated the gas-mask canister and passed clear through his body. I could not get the bayonet out, so I removed the rifle from it.

Young: 'Christ! Who did that?'

'There were two guys fighting for the hole . . .'

'Where's the other one?'

'He got blown up in that bunch of rocks.'

CHAPTER VII

THERE were wounded men to be taken care of, so we got busy and bandaged up those we could and carried the rest back to the first-aid station. That was one busy, messy place. It had been shelled too. The dead that had been piled up when we passed there before were scattered all around.

Orders now came down for the Ninety-Seventh Company to advance up the ravine. We went about three hundred yards and took up positions again. Lieutenant McElroy came along and told us the Germans were preparing to attack.

Major Sibling went by with another officer and we heard him say, 'The line has got to be held . . .'

A rifle cracked on the right — then others joined in. Soon it was a roar. We were lying half in and half out of the ravine. There had been no time to dig in.

I squirmed to get set. The men on my right and left had their necks stretched and they were looking straight ahead. The next minute the Germans came in sight — first one or two, then dozens. We opened fire at once. The trees in front of us made it difficult for us to get a good shot at them, but we kept up a steady fire in their direction.

The Germans continued to advance. They seemed to be trying to hold a line, which is a hard thing to do in a wood. Besides, we were beginning to pick off a few. As long as they stood up, they made good targets.

We had a rotten position. I could see that just as soon as I opened fire. Fifty feet ahead of us was a ledge of rocks jutting out of the ground. While the Germans were at a distance, the rocks did not make so much difference, but as they advanced, the rocks cut off our fire. To clear the rocks our shots would go over the heads of the Germans. There was no chance of changing our position in the ravine now that the Germans were upon us. Our only salvation was to get out of the ravine and take up position behind the rocks in front of us. The ravine was not offering us much protection anyhow, as we had to expose ourselves quite a bit in order to fire. If we were behind the rocks they would provide good protection. Then, another thing, if the Germans reached the rocks, they were going to have the drop on us. They could hide behind the rocks and fire directly into the ravine.

We had orders to hold the line and that does not mean to advance — and it is not good policy to get out ahead of the firing line. But we were going to be in a bad fix once the Germans got under cover of those rocks.

I decided the only thing to do was to advance our part of the line. On my right were Dale, Bretherton, and Corbet. On my left were Young, Getty, Ira McFadden, and Corporal Black. I could not see either side beyond Corbet or Black, as the ravine made a curve.

I hollered to Dale and then to Young, 'I'm going ahead.'

All I wanted to do was to get their attention so they could see where I was going. Usually you advance your

men first, then follow. But you've got to tell them where to go and I didn't have time to do that. I knew if I reached the rocks, they would follow without orders.

So far in our section the German fire was very light. They could not see anybody to shoot at. It's hard to see a man lying down in a wood. We could see them because they moved. The young trees and underbrush were blocking their way so they could not make a sudden rush at us. They had to pick their way and they were having hard pickings.

The ground between the ravine and the rocks was covered with trees and vines. I figured the best way to get through was to run in a half-crouching position. I picked out a rock directly in front of me and made for it. It was not more than fifty feet, but it seemed long at that. I stumbled a couple of times and ended up crawling, but I got there all right.

The rock in front of me stuck out of the ground about two and a half feet. Over the top of it was a vine or creeper of some sort. It had a leaf like poison ivy. By pushing the leaves to one side, I could see through them and they shielded me from view.

I got a good eyeful the first time. Not more than seventy-five feet ahead were four Germans crawling toward me down a shallow gully that ran straight for these rocks. They were carrying a dismantled machine gun. I poked my rifle through the trees. The leading man turned his head, perhaps to talk to the man in back of him, but he never turned his head again. I got him square. The other three flattened out on the ground. The second man was a poor target, as he was

partly hidden by the dead one — besides, he was lower down. The third man's helmet showed plain between the spread-out feet of the second man. A rifle bullet shot direct will pass through a helmet very easily. I aimed right for the center of the helmet and fired. The helmet gave a little jump. The man rose to his feet, staggered over the man in front of him, then fell forward and rolled over on his back. I couldn't understand how he was able to get up, but his getting up allowed the man in back of him to get away. This fourth man must have acted fast because the one that got up took only two steps and fell. He couldn't have been up more than three seconds.

The second man, I knew, was still alive. To get him I would have to stand up. The rock I was behind had a broad flat top. The muzzle of my rifle did not reach to within six inches of the outer edge. This made it bad for me, as I could not bring my rifle down low enough to get a good shot at the man lying out in front.

Just then a bullet went *plow!* against the front of my rock. That decided me against getting up. Besides, I could shoot this fellow in the leg and that would put him out of action. His right leg was partly up on the side of the gully. If he had drawn up his legs, he would have been better off. He was wearing short leather leggings and I aimed slightly above the top of the legging, just about the calf of the leg, and fired. Both legs kicked up. First he pushed himself up from the ground with his arms as if he was going to kneel, then he lay flat again. He made several attempts to sit up before he finally succeeded. He had his back to me, but I

could see by his movements that he was fussing with his leg.

Back farther in the woods I could see Germans ducking in and out among the trees.

Dale now slipped up on my right and took position behind a rock. Young and Getty came in on my left. I was more anxious about the right, as the Germans seemed to be coming more from that way. I looked back toward the ravine and saw Bretherton and Corbet moving up. I hollered to Dale, 'Tell Bretherton and Corbet to watch the right.' Dale nodded. He looked warm.

The fire from the German side was getting heavier. They must have been trying to establish a line rather than drive us out. Their fire was of a random nature the same as ours. They were up against the same thing we were — the trees had them blocked.

We kept pouring a steady stream of bullets toward their line, through the longest straight open spaces between the trees we could find. And if a German popped up near by, we got him. Where there is a lot of bark flying off trees and bullets whistling around, it worries the other fellow and he is not so eager to advance. Some of the Germans had reached to within twenty-five feet of us, but the majority were hugging the ground. We had them stopped, and they knew it. Every time a German started down my little gully, I got him. It was the longest open space I had.

The wounded man out in front was now lying on his back. He had to in order to escape my fire. I shot over the top of him. I could see a lot of Germans lying out

in front, but I did not know whether they were alive or dead.

I heard Captain Vare on the right shouting, 'Keep up the fire! . . . Keep up the fire!'

Just as soon as we would lay off a minute, the Germans would start to advance.

Along toward evening I heard Corbet shouting, 'They are advancing on the right.'

Looking over, I could see our men moving up from the ravine. Spud Murphy's group was next on my right. I crossed over to see what orders Spud had.

'How far are we to advance, Spud?'

Murphy: 'To the top of the hill. We are to keep up the fire as we advance.'

I told each one of my men — there were only six — that we would crawl slowly forward and fire as often as we could. This would keep the Germans down and also mask our advance. I warned them not to take any chances. If there was a German lying ahead, better to shoot him. If he was dead, it wouldn't make any difference. The last thing I said was, 'Guide on me.'

We were on the other side of the rocks all set to go by the time Murphy's men were up to us. We tried to crawl, but with the thick vines and underbrush it was necessary to pick your way the best you could. First you were up, then down.

Corporal Black was on my left with his group. It was up to him to keep in contact with me. I had nothing to do with him.

The German fire was getting more irregular, although they were still nipping off the branches over our heads.

Perhaps they figured their advance was over and were settling down to stay. Our fire was not so heavy or steady, but we were still making lots of noise.

I noticed that my men were not shooting the Germans lying down. I did not say anything because there was something about the positions of the bodies that said dead. Besides, we had the drop on them. In the first twenty-five feet there were eight dead Germans.

I was traveling between Getty and Dale on the left side of the gully that ran down to my rock. I would not let any of the men walk in the gully itself. It was too open. We drew near to the place where I first spotted the Germans carrying the machine gun. The first man had been carrying both the gun and tripod. It was the small type.

The man I shot in the leg was lying at least five feet in back of the first man. I had thought he was right behind him. He must have been one of the ammunition carriers, as I saw two cans beside him. He heard us coming and sat up. When he turned his head and saw me, he looked wild-eyed. I was hoping he would not reach for any weapon, as I didn't care to kill him now. He tried to put his hands up and at the same time point to his wounded leg.

I hollered, 'No, no!' and motioned to him to keep his hands down. I didn't want him sticking his hands up. The Germans up ahead might see him and get wise that we were advancing.

He had the wounded leg partly bared and it was bleeding. I remembered that I had an extra paper-covered first-aid packet in my blouse pocket. I pulled

it out, partly tore it open, and handed it over to him, making a rolling motion with my hand. The wild look on his face changed and I guess he tried to thank me.

In order not to expose myself in the gully, I had knelt down and stretched out in order to give him the packet. I was about to straighten up when I noticed a startled look come into the wounded man's eyes. He was staring above me. I turned my head to the left and at the same time a rifle cracked over my head. A German with a rifle fell forward over some bushes. Young had picked him off just in time. The German had been waiting for me to get up. He sure had me dead to rights. No doubt he was the machine gun's fourth man — the one that had got away.

I didn't know how to operate the machine gun, so it was no use trying to take it along.

The firing on the right got heavy. It sounded like a pitched battle. I started over toward Murphy and was just in time to see his group get tangled up with a bunch of Germans who were hiding out behind some brush in a small hollow. The Germans were surprised, but were showing fight.

Murphy's men were in a general mix-up. They were fighting in all directions and in all manners. Some were wrestling on the ground without any weapons. Others were standing apart clashing bayonets. The nearest German to me was wrestling with one of our men. They had locked bayonets high in the air. One was trying to push the other down. They were standing close together, and I didn't know what else to do, so I

gave the German a stiff jab in the hip with my bayonet and he fell.

The next fellows were sparring at one another. I jabbed that German in the leg and he was through. The leg was the best place and it wasn't so messy. I saw one fellow drive a bayonet clear through a German, but before he could get it out another German ran him through. A short jab and a quick withdrawal is the best.

The next German had one of our men in a bad fix. Our man had fallen and was now grasping the German's bayonet with both hands trying to keep it from going into him. The bayonet was piercing the gas-mask bag on his chest. I yelled and rushed for the German. He saw me coming and swept his bayonet free from the fellow's grasp and swung straight for my head. I ducked low, but I must have thrown my rifle up because he struck my bayonet, knocking it to one side. From my crouching position I socked the rifle butt into his groin. It lifted him off his feet and he sank to the ground in a heap. It took all the wind out of me and I slipped down myself. The man that had been grasping the bayonet must have fainted. He was lying back rather dead-looking — his now fingerless, bleeding hands limp at his sides.

I could see some of our men trying to help out another fellow. They kept fiddling around trying to get at the front of the German with their bayonets. I yelled at them, 'Jab him in the leg!' One of them did, and the German was through.

These Germans were wearing square packs on their

backs, and it was no use trying to stick them through the packs, as it would be hard getting the bayonet out again. If you hit them over the head, you were likely to bust your rifle.

I spotted Murphy and he was bloody, but I didn't think it was his blood, judging from the way he was dancing around. Spud and a German were going to it. The only trouble was, there was a tree between them. Spud was having a hard time trying to get at the German, who always kept on the other side of the tree. I slipped over and jabbed the German in the leg and he tumbled over backwards. Spud came around the tree, and was he mad!

'What the hell did you do that for? I'd 'a' got him!'

The mix-up lasted about ten minutes. Two of Murphy's men were wounded. There were eight Germans killed and ten wounded. My group came through all right except for a few slight scratches.

It was hard to get the fellows settled down and on their way again. They wanted to talk it over and show how they did it.

It was getting darker all the time, so we had to keep closer together. We didn't know whether we had hit the German line or whether they had one. We could hear a machine gun back on the hill some place, but it was shooting high over our heads and that led me to believe that there must be more Germans up ahead. Otherwise the machine gun would be sweeping down the hill toward us.

Black, on the left, was having a shooting match with a bunch of Germans. Some of the Germans were

crossing over our way, but back farther on the hill. I hurried my group forward to cut them off. Once they got back of their machine gun, the machine gun would open up on us. Quite a few got away, and not long after that the machine gun started to rake the hill in front of us. Trees block machine-gun bullets the same as rifle bullets, but some bullets seem to be able to find their way among the trees. Anyhow, they got to pecking all around us.

The machine gun was hitting more on our left and it didn't swing very far to the right, so we closed over on the right until the group was out of the direct line of fire. The fact that the machine gun was working was pretty good evidence that there were no Germans between us and it.

It was dark among the trees and this made the going rather tough. I finally closed my men in one behind the other. The way we had been strung out, it would take us all night to get to the top of the hill. You can move faster in a column.

I told Murphy we were going up ahead to try to get a line on the machine gun.

Murphy said, 'I've only got four men left, so we might just as well all go.'

Black wanted to go too, but we talked him into staying back with the line, which was still picking its way along. Bendow was on Murphy's right and Black got in touch with him.

The machine gun was on our left, but farther up the hill. Our best bet was to get well on its flank or rear before closing over on it. The farther up the hill we went,

the rockier it got. There were big broad spaces of solid rock. It was still light in those spaces, as there were no trees there and we had to watch and keep out of them so as not to be seen.

We gradually closed over to the left and finally located the machine gun. It was close to the center of one of those open spaces, but was protected by projecting rocks on the sides and rear. We could see men walking around — most likely the men who had fallen back had taken up positions here.

I moved around to the rear with two men. My view was shut off by a thick growth of brambles until I reached a spot almost directly back of the gun. Here there was a break in the rocks — a sort of crevice that ran down and then turned to the right. From this place a man could heave a grenade at the machine-gun position and then hide in the crevice.

Bretherton and Corbet, who were with me, were carrying grenades, both DF and OF. I had them take up position here and told them to wait for the first rifle crack from our position and then throw a grenade at the machine gun and duck down so as to keep clear of our rifle fire. I figured there must be quite a number of Germans lying around and they would get up and run some place else when the grenades went off. Then we would have a chance to shoot them down and besides capture the machine gun.

I got back to the other bunch and told them to open fire across the open space just as soon as the grenades went off. I fired the first shot, then waited. In a few seconds both grenades went off with a loud bang. We

opened fire at once. Quite a few Germans got to running about. Some ran directly toward us. We got most of them.

I had arranged with Murphy that his men would direct their fire across in front of the machine gun, but not directly at it. His fire would keep the Germans down on the other side while my group charged the machine gun.

About a minute after the grenades went off, we ceased firing and hit for the machine gun. There was only one man in the position when we reached it. He was tugging away at the gun, either trying to turn it on us or else jam it so we could not use it. Somebody ran a bayonet through him.

In another second we were under a heavy rifle fire from the left side. The Germans were getting ready to attack us. We answered them back, but it didn't pipe them down.

Murphy crawled in — we were in a sort of half-moon place — and said, 'Did you try the machine gun?'

I said, 'I don't know how to work it.' I had given the trigger a pull, but it didn't work, so I left it alone.

Murphy got busy with it and I could hear him cursing. The German fire ceased and in a few seconds they started coming toward us, though we kept up our fire. Just then there were two big explosions right in the midst of the advancing Germans. I could see them jump. At the same time somebody shouted, 'Keep down!'

There were two more loud reports — sounded like artillery fire. The Germans were in a panic. They ran

right past our position without stopping. Some of them ran down the hill toward the ravine. Others ran into Murphy's men, who picked off a few.

Things now quieted down and a voice said, 'Is it all right to come over, Nap?'

It was Bretherton. I had forgotten all about him and Corbet over in the crack in the rock. They had heaved the grenades that broke up the German attack.

'Stay there — we're coming that way.'

Murphy called to his men and we all went over to Corbet and Bretherton.

Me: 'That was a fine barrage you fellows laid down for us.'

Corbet: 'Did you hear me holler, "Keep down," when we heaved the second grenades?'

'Yes, what was the matter?'

Corbet: 'All we had left was a DF grenade apiece and we were afraid the pieces would hit you fellows as well as the Germans.'

The DF (Defensive) grenade is made of iron that flies in small pieces. You're supposed to be under cover when you throw them. You can't stand out in the open and throw one because the pieces would fly back and hit you. The OF (Offensive) grenade is made of tin and can be thrown in the open.

Corbet and Bretherton were in a tight place. When the first grenades were thrown, before we charged the machine gun, a bunch of Germans piled into the same crevice with them. (It was quite dark.) Orders must have come to open fire because they all got busy with

their rifles. Corbet and Bretherton fired too, so as not to attract attention. When the orders came for the Germans to advance, Corbet and Bretherton dropped their rifles and pulled out a grenade apiece and heaved them after the Germans.

We had reached the top of the hill and we got our men together and started back toward the right to find our company. After traveling some distance we heard a voice below us saying, 'Ninety-Seventh Company, close over on the right.' It was Lieutenant McElroy. It was impossible to see anybody, it was so dark now, but you could follow a voice.

I started in the direction of McElroy's voice, repeating every few feet, 'Ninety-Seventh Company, close in on the right.' This was for the benefit of the men behind me; also to identify myself to the men I was approaching.

Finally I got in touch with Black and Bendow's men and followed them to the right until word came to halt.

Our company was now posted along the top of the hill. Down below us was a deep valley and across it was another wooded hill. As the night advanced, the darkness seemed to get worse. We couldn't see a hand in front of our faces, it was so inky black.

Along toward midnight we heard a voice calling,

'Ninety-Seventh Company!... Ninety-Seventh Company!...'

It was away down in the ravine we had come out of. Then I heard Captain Vare on the right saying, 'Find out who is calling Ninety-Seventh Company.'

The voice from the ravine called again, 'Ninety-

Seventh Company!' The voice had an anxious tone to it. Then I heard men crashing through the woods in the rear and voices saying, 'Who calls the Ninety-Seventh Company?'

After a time we got in touch with the voice. It was a battalion runner and he had orders for us to evacuate the hill and woods at once. There was a mad scramble in the dark. Men were running into each other and bumping into trees. We finally took hold of one another's hands, but it was slow work, as the trees were close together. Word would come from the rear, 'Hold the line! . . . The line is broken! . . .' We were all cursing. We would move ahead a few steps and then stop.

We could hear voices below. I believe one of them was Major Sibling's, saying: 'You'll have to hurry, men. Our artillery is going to lay down a barrage in these woods in about ten minutes . . .'

His voice was not loud or excited, but there was something about it that made us feel that it meant just what it said.

We were more frantic than ever now to get out. We would try to hurry forward. Then from the rear the cry would come, 'The line is broken! . . . Hold the line! . . .'

We reached the ravine at last and waited for the last man to come in. Then we climbed out of the ravine on the south bank. In front of us was the field we had crossed in taking Bouresches. Orders were given to double-time. We were about halfway across the field when our barrage started. It was the first time our batteries had really come into play and they surely went to it with a vengeance.

We traveled back to the broad road leading to Paris, the one that runs out of Montreuil-aux-Lions. Here in the woods in back of a battery of 155s we found holes dug that had been used by some other outfit. We crawled in and slept.

In the morning when I woke up I looked around and could hardly believe my eyes. There was our galley and there was Nagel, the cook. The fire was going and the kettles steaming. It looked good! It was just like getting home.

I got up and went over and shook hands with Nagel. He looked at me kind of funny as we shook hands. We talked for a little while and then he looked around at the other fellows.

'Where's Joe Bunts?'

'Joe got killed the first day in the wheat-field . . .'

'And Sergeant Cram? . . .'

'He was wounded at Bouresches . . .'

'How about Storer? . . .'

'He was killed in the ravine with Monson . . .'

'I see,' said Nagel, and he went back to his cooking.

There was plenty of chow that morning. Nagel had cooked enough for the full two hundred and fifty men of our company. There were just eighty of us left to eat it.

It struck me that morning that the men had a peculiar look on their faces.

I asked Nagel, 'Haven't the fellows got a queer look on their faces?'

And he said, 'Yes . . . And so have you.'

CHAPTER VIII

Down a way from where our holes were was an abandoned stone quarry. Running along the bottom was a small stream of water. It was the only water around except what Nagel had for cooking and he had to haul that from a farm about half a kilo away.

Five of us took our shaving outfits down to the old quarry to clean up a little. Although we were out of the front lines, we were by no means out of shell fire, and the kind the Germans drop in the back areas have some kick. I took my gas mask along in case of accident, as back areas, especially wooded ones, were usually shelled with gas.

We made holes along the course of the stream and let them fill up with water and then we washed at the holes. We were about through when German shells began to land in the woods around the quarry. They were of the large caliber and made quite a racket.

We crouched along the northern edge of the quarry which had straight sides about fifteen feet high. The shelling kept up, and once in a while I was sure I could hear the mushy explosion of gas shells. I swung my gas mask up to the alert position. The rest of the fellows did the same except Young. Young did not have his gas mask with him.

Young was always forgetting something. He fell out for inspection one day up in the old trenches without any equipment on. Instead of a rifle he had a book in

his hand. As a penalty he was made to wear equipment for a week straight without taking it off.

It was a good five hundred yards back to the holes and the shells seemed to fall more thickly in that direction, so Young could not go back. Just then several shells landed right above the quarry sending a shower of dirt down on top of us. The next minute two gas shells exploded out in the middle of the quarry. First it was like a ball. The air was quiet and we could watch the grayish smoke gradually spread out. It began to roll closer to us. The fellows put on their gas masks.

Young looked anxious and so was I.

I said: 'Young, there is only one thing to do. . . . You hold your breath while I breathe through the respirator. Then I will slip the mouthpiece to you and you breathe in while I hold my breath. . . . We will hold the nose with our hands and not use the clippers. . . . We won't try to put the mask part over our faces . . .'

There was no time for arguments, as the faint odor of mustard now reached our smellers. We got our heads together.

I said, 'Here, take it . . . just one good breath . . .'

I held my breath and he breathed in, holding his nose with his hand. I gradually let out my breath so as to be all ready. It does not do to breathe out too forcibly on account of the flutter valve through which the air escapes. I hoped Young would remember that.

Young moved his head up and down as a signal. I reached over with my right hand and took hold of the rubber hose close to the mouthpiece, and quickly transferred the mouthpiece from Young's mouth into

mine. I breathed out a little first, and then drew in a long breath. I was watching Young's face all the time and he was watching mine. I shook my head up and down and Young reached over with his right hand and grasped the hose. I released my teeth and he transferred it back to his mouth.

Then there was a *blah-h-h* sound from the flutter valve. Young had let all his breath out at once. I felt like bawling him out, but the gas was beginning to smart my eyes a little, so I kept quiet. He didn't really hurt anything, only he could have been breathing in.

The first few transfers were rather hurried, sort of anxious like, but soon it came very easy. By the time one comfortably exhaled, the other had inhaled. Soon we got to talking. That is, one would talk while the other breathed.

My first word was, 'All ready?'

I said it just at the time I was about to remove the mouthpiece from his mouth. He looked surprised, but we had been trained to talk with our masks on, so it wasn't anything really new. It is necessary to know just what you are going to say and keep exhaling while you say it and not get excited. Our conversation was confined to short sentences, such as:

'Hand it over . . .'

'Don't breathe all day . . .'

'Who the hell is? . . .'

'You look good sucking air . . .'

'You'd look worse not sucking it . . .'

After about fifteen minutes of this breathing on the installment plan, I thought the air looked clear and my

eyes were not smarting. I took a short sniff of air. It seemed all right, so I took another sniff. Young saw what I was doing and he took a sniff and nodded his head.

Then I bawled him out good for forgetting his gas mask.

The shelling had stopped, so we picked up our toilet articles and beat it back to camp. The area around our hole had been heavily shelled. A tree was lying across the top of my hole. It had been uprooted a short distance away. Dale and Conroy were trying to move it, as it lay across their holes too. The bunch of us got at it and lifted it to one side.

Over by the galley another bunch was milling around, so we went over to see what was the matter. A shell had landed close to the galley, overturning it on its side. Nagel, Murphy, and four other fellows were trying to get it right side up. With our added help it was finally righted. There were pans and coffee containers strewn around everywhere.

Nagel suddenly remembered that Barrington, an official grease-ball, Hoover and Gravenstone, and the two mules had left some time before the shelling to haul water from the farm. They hadn't come back yet, and Nagel got worried.

Murphy and I started over toward the Paris road to look for them. We saw no sign of them until we had passed over the top of a hill, and then we saw a wagon pulled over to the side of the road. We hurried up and as we got closer we made out the two mules, still

hitched to the wagon, and over near some trees we saw two men kneeling over a third man who was stretched out on the ground.

Murphy said, 'Look at them damn mules . . . If they ain't comical! . . .'

They did look funny. They still had on their gas masks — long canister-looking things with goggles, and the mules' ears stuck straight up at attention.

Hoover and Gravenstone, with their gas masks still hanging out, were kneeling beside Barrington.

'What happened, Gravy?' I asked.

Gravenstone: 'Barrington got gassed . . .'

Barrington half opened his eyes and he sure had a sick look.

'How did it happen?'

Gravenstone: 'Me and Hoover were trailing on behind the cart and Barrington was driving. All at once a flock of gas shells hit over on the side of the road. The mules jumped over to the other side. Barrington hopped out, holding his nose and hollering, "Gas! . . . Gas! . . ." Then he breaks out the mules' gas masks from under the seat and slips them on the mules, but he forgot to put his own on. When Hoover and me reached him — we both had our masks on — he had just finished the mules. As soon as he saw us with the masks on, he put his on, but I guess it was too late. He'd already got a dose. We all sat down on the side of the road to wait for the gas to clear away, and pretty soon Barrington slipped his mask off and started to vomit . . . Then he rolled over on his belly. We tried to get his mask back on him again, but he was too sick.'

I said, 'Did you notice any first-aid stations along the road?'

Hoover: 'There's one back at the farm where we got the water . . .'

'We'd better get the water off the cart,' I said, 'and haul Barrington back . . . It won't do to walk him . . .'

There were three water containers on the cart and after we got them off we chained up the tail-gate so it would stand out behind and make the bottom of the cart long enough for Barrington to lie on. Gravenstone took the masks off the mules and we loaded Barrington on the cart. Gravenstone drove and Hoover sat back with Barrington to keep him from slipping off. It was one of those two-wheeled French carts that teetered up and down.

We got Barrington to the first-aid station, but he died before the medics could do anything for him.

When we got back to camp, Nagel was opening the can of milk to put in the coffee.

He glanced at us and said, 'Where's Barrington?'

Hoover told him.

Nagel said, 'How did he happen to get gassed and not you fellows?'

So Gravenstone told him how Barrington put the gas masks on the mules and forgot his own.

Nagel looked around at the mules. The mules were gnawing the bark off a tree.

CHAPTER IX

Our artillery was still hammering away for all it was worth. The rumor was that they were going to blow Belleau Wood off the map.

After a good mess of slum that evening, I crawled into my hole for a little sleep. Soon I heard Sergeant Strohm's voice,

'Up you come!'

Then I heard Conroy saying, 'What do you want?'

Strohm: 'What do I want? . . . Put your equipment on and stand by . . . You'll find out quick enough . . .'

It was still light when we swung out of the woods across the Paris road and headed north.

The last thing I saw was Nagel standing by the galley with a big spoon in his hand.

We skirted along the edge of several woods. At times we had to cross open places that were swept at regular intervals by machine-gun fire. Here we would crouch low and make a dash.

At one place we passed a tall pyramid-shaped structure made of brick. It looked like a chimney, but the house had been destroyed. Our artillery was supposed to be using it as an observation tower.

It was dusk when we reached the town of Lucy-le-Bocage.

Somebody said, 'Belleau Wood again.'

We had come out of it only the night before, but it seemed like a year.

Instead of going into the town, we pass along its western edge and continue north. Now we enter a gully between two wooded ridges. The ground is rough and the way is blocked with broken tree branches. It makes traveling slow and the men straggle out, but there are no stops made to close up. We seem to be in a hurry.

The man in front of me disappears and for a moment I am lost. Then I see a big open space through the trees ahead and I hear somebody say,

'Over this way!... Over this way!...'

I cross over and there is Lieutenant Mansfield and one of his battalion scouts, Joe Renn, standing at the edge of the woods. They were both with the Ninety-Seventh Company originally. Mansfield points out across the field toward a steep hill:

'The Ninety-Seventh Company is taking up positions on Hill 142 and relieving the Fifth Marines...'

There are men ahead scrambling up the hill and I head in their direction. This is the hill the Fifth Marines charged two days ago. The slope is still strewn with the bodies of dead Marines. We heard they drove the Germans from the hill, but with great loss to themselves.

At the top of the hill, covering the southern and western advances, is a Maxim German machine gun. It is the big type, mounted on a large tripod. It has a mean look. The cartridge belt still hangs from it. Sprawled out on the ground near by are three badly messed-up dead Germans. They look as if they had been struck with grenades.

The remnants of the Fifth Marines were starting

down the hill when we reached the top. Lieutenant McElroy was standing near the machine gun and told us that our company would occupy the holes on the other side of the hill which were formerly occupied by the Fifth Marines.

I crossed over and picked out a good hole. From this hole I got a good view of the northern slope of the hill. It was covered with dead Germans. Many of them were lying face down with bayonets still sticking in them.

All during the night the air was full of rushing shells going both ways, but the ones headed north and east (ours) seemed to predominate. Three times that night there came from the north the sound of extra loud explosions. Then the northern sky would light up red for miles around. It looked like the flare from a vast open furnace. Streaks of light like lightning would flash through the red and we could hear a crackling like giant firecrackers exploding. We knew this was the blowing up of German ammunition dumps by our artillery.

Near midnight I lay back in my hole looking up at the sky. The air was clear and the stars were shining bright. I concentrated on one real bright star, trying to see if I could catch a glimpse of the shells that were passing between me and the star. There were so many shells going over you would think they would shut out the light from the stars. Besides, I did not have anything else to do, but, sad to say, I did not catch a flicker of a shadow.

I was about to give it up as a bad job when a most

peculiar thing happened. There was a sharp crack overhead, more like a snap, and a strange light appeared high in the sky. It was a sizzling kind of a light, as if two high-powered electric wires had crossed. It died out in a moment. I wondered if it were possible that two shells going in opposite directions had met in midair.

When it was nearly daylight I heard a rattling noise along the edge of the trees. I waited until it came up to where I was lying. It was Spud Murphy and two other fellows and they were drawing small two-wheeled wagons, the kind the Germans used for hauling ammunition and other materials. Spud and the fellows had spied them back in the valley and had gone down and got them. They wanted them to haul back the German machine gun in.

After our morning stand-to, I had a meal of cold canned bull and hardtack. Then, as things seemed nice and peaceful for the moment, I pulled off my shoes and slipped on the red-and-yellow bedroom slippers that the old French woman had given me in Bouresches. I lighted up a Tom Palmer cigar which had been sent me in a package from home, lay back in my hole with my feet sticking up over the side, and wished I had a morning paper.

After a little while I was conscious that somebody was coming up to my hole from the other side. I looked up. It was Lieutenant McElroy. He took one look and said something that sounded like, 'Well, for Christ's sake!...' and walked away. I guess he was mad. I pulled in my feet and put the shoes back on

again. The slippers went back into the combat pack. Still there wasn't any law against wearing bedroom slippers in the front line that I knew of.

As the day advanced, I got a better view of the surrounding country. Over on the right front I made out the town of Belleau, still in the hands of the Germans. Over on the left front was Torcy. The Fifth Marines had taken it the day before and still occupied it.

My eye traveled across country from Torcy to Belleau. A high wooded ridge seemed to connect the two towns. There was a bald spot that shone out from behind a fringe of trees directly across on the ridge in front of me. I could see men moving across the bald spot, but the distance was too great for me to make out definitely who they were and what they were doing.

I reported what I saw to Lieutenant McElroy. He came over and, after taking a long look through his glasses, he said: 'They're Germans! . . . And it looks as if they were preparing a counter attack on Torcy . . .'

He handed me his glasses, adding, 'Keep a lookout while I get word back to the artillery . . .'

I watched through the glasses. The Germans kept hurrying past, four at a time. Our artillery was firing an occasional shell into the German back area. Then suddenly our artillery must have got the word. A shell lighted beyond the ridge in front. Then one hit on the bald spot. And the next minute our barrage landed. The earth and trees seemed to hop into the air. Men ran this way and that. . . . The whole ridge seemed to quiver and shake. . . . The dust and smoke from the landing shells rose like a thick curtain and gradually

drifted on toward the north. . . . It reminded me of the terrific German barrage laid down on us in the ravine two days before. . . . And like that German barrage, it was as short as it was heavy. It lasted only ten minutes, but there sure was a lot of metal distributed around in that wood in that short period. Through the glass I could make out men dragging themselves along the ground and others crawling and some helping others.

Glasses are a great thing to see the war through. . . .

McElroy came back and asked me how things looked now. I handed him back his glasses and said, 'I guess the Germans will not attack to-day.'

The rest of the day was quiet with the exception of the regular artillery exchanges. In the evening our positions were shelled by the Germans, but nobody was hurt.

Later on that night we learned that an infantry outfit, the Seventh Regiment of the Third Division, was coming in to take over the entire front and we were going back for a long rest.

Early the next morning orders were passed around to leave our positions and form in the rear to move out. We moved down Hill 142 at a fast pace and traveled back the same route we had taken coming in. Day was breaking when we crossed the Paris road and entered the woods where our camp was. The galley was in the same place and steam arose from several containers near by. Nagel was standing there and, as we trooped by, he seemed to be counting us.

I picked out the same hole I had before, removed my

combat pack and other equipment, broke out my mess kit and cup, and hurried back to the galley. Several fellows were before me and Nagel was busy passing out the food — bacon, fried potatoes, bread, a spoonful of jam, and hot coffee.

Nagel was saying: 'Lots of chow, fellows . . . Come back for seconds. . . .'

When he was putting the bacon on my pan he said, 'Where's Spud Murphy?'

'Spud and four other fellows are hauling in a German machine gun. They should be here soon. . . .'

Nagel: 'Didn't lose any this time, then? . . .'

'Nope. We came through all right . . .'

He put an extra spoonful of jam on my cover.

The rest of the day we slept and that night we slept.

The next day we sat around and filled up on rumors. One rumor was that the Marines were to be detached from the army and sent back to Paris for special guard duty. Another rumor was that we were to go back on ship duty and another that we were to be returned to the States. . . .

As Young said: 'Everything points to the fact that the war is over for us — at least so far as active service at the front is concerned . . .'

Conroy: 'Of course it is. It stands to reason . . . Why, there aren't enough Marines left out of the Fifth and Sixth to make up a good battalion . . .'

We were interrupted by an order to assemble with the rest of the company in the woods behind the galley.

We were called to attention. The captain and

lieutenants were standing on one side and our Top Kicker, Kuhns, was with them. Kuhns walked out in front of us — he had a paper in his hand.

Kuhns: 'At ease. I have here an order from Brigade Headquarters to be read at first assembly.'

He then read:

The brigade commander takes pride in announcing that, in addition to the Commander-in-Chief's telegram of congratulation to the Fourth Brigade, published in an endorsement from the Division Commander, dated June 9, General Pershing has to-day visited division headquarters and sent his personal greetings and congratulations to the Marine Brigade. He also added that General Foch, Commander-in Chief of the Allied armies in France, especially charged him this morning to give the Marine Brigade his love and congratulations on their fine work of the past week.

By command of Brigadier-General Harbord.

(Signed) H. Lay, *Major, Adjutant.*

As Kuhns finished and turned to walk away, somebody shouted, 'When do we eat?'

Later Strohm came along. He seemed happy and said: 'Check up on all equipment. . . . Turn in a report of what's missing . . .'

Carney: 'When are we going to get our blanket rolls back, Strohm?'

Strohm: 'When we get to Paris.'

Conroy: 'See! Didn't I tell you? . . . Old Heinie wouldn't say that if he didn't know something . . .'

So we got busy and checked over our things. We were feeling good. Some of the fellows got to singing our favorite songs:

'Oh, Lulu had a baby — she called him Sunny Jim.
She threw him in a —— pot, to see if he could swim.
Oh, —— away at Lulu — away good and strong —
What are you going to do for your ——
When Lulu's dead and gone?'

'Hinky Dinky Parley Vou' came in for a few choice verses, and then we sang our regular marching song:

'Oh, the infantry, the cavalry, the dirty engineers,
They couldn't lick a leather-neck
In a hundred thousand years.
As we go mar-ching, and the band begins to p-l-a-y,
You can hear the people shouting,
Oh, the raggedy —— Marines are on parade.'

Somebody yelled, 'Sing the Marine Hymn.'

And somebody answered, 'The Marine hell!'

At noon we had a good meal of boiled beef, potatoes, and gravy. We all got our bellies full and were feeling happy. Even the mules had a fresh bale of hay.

Along in the afternoon Murphy came over to my hole and we got to talking about Tours and Bordeaux, when suddenly we heard the command,

'Halt!'

We looked over toward the galley and there we saw a long line of men. They wore the forest-green uniforms like those we had worn before they made us wear regular uniforms. And they had on overseas caps and carried full packs.

Murphy said, 'Christ! they look like new Marines . . . Let's go over and see who they are.'

Our Top Kicker, Kuhns, the captain, and lieutenants were together talking. Kuhns had a paper in his hand.

We got to chinning with the new men. They were Marines all right, fresh from the States. They had arrived at Brest only a few days before and had been rushed across France in box-cars.

We asked: 'What outfit?'

And they said, 'The First Marine Replacement Battalion . . .'

CHAPTER X

It was the first time we had heard the word 'replacement,' but we knew what it meant. Replacements were something we had not figured on. This put a different face on the war.

As Young said: 'The men may die, but the Ninety-Seventh Company goes on. . . . Here are men who have come thousands of miles seemingly to help us out . . . in reality they carry our death warrant . . .'

After the new men had been assigned to the different platoons and squads, they were entertained by the old-timers, who filled them full of bunk about the war.

Conroy was over in the next hole handing out some rare stuff to four men grouped around him:

'. . . I had to shove my foot against his chest to get my bayonet out . . . I no more than had it out when I heard something crashing at my left . . . I swung around . . . and there was a big German headed straight for me . . . I jumped to one side and his bayonet stuck in the tree . . . I ran him through . . . Just then . . .'

I said, 'Were you bare-chested when you did that, Conroy?'

'Aw, you didn't see everything . . .'

'Don't forget to tell them about the time you saved the flag and brought it back to Pershing . . .'

We were making the most of this fine audience, knowing that once the new men saw action we wouldn't be able to tell them anything any more — when another order was passed around.

God Have Mercy on Us!

Every man must write a letter at once to his nearest relative and be sure to give his serial number. This would make it easier for his friends or relatives to locate him if he was killed or wounded. The letters had to be brief, as they had to be censored. I had a hard time writing this letter to my mother so as not to give the impression that it was a death notice. And still it had to be written as though it was going to be my last letter.

The letter:

FRANCE, *June* 18, 1918

MY DEAR MOTHER

Safe, without even a scratch after going through the last three weeks, means a whole lot. Our outfit was one of the first units to engage the Huns in their last advance on Paris. As soon as I get out of hearing of the guns I will try to write a few details, just now much letter writing is out of the question.

As a matter of record my identification tag number is 123284. From all indications it's a very lucky number, but it's too early in the game to make any boasts, although I think the worst period is over — it can't be much worse.

As in outside life so it is on the battle-field; dangers may be closer and more numerous, but escape or death is as God wills it, so try not to worry even when the casualty lists are the longest.

I received your letter telling about receiving those violets and was glad to know they reached you O.K.

Good-bye for the present.

Your loving son

WILL

CHAPTER XI

EARLY next morning the roar of a barrage came from the northeast and we knew Belleau Wood was catching hell again. Along toward evening came orders to stand by with combat packs to move out.

It was getting dusk when we filed out of the woods and crossed the Paris road headed north. Heavy firing was still going on up ahead. It was the same old trail leading to Belleau Wood. But it was practically a new two hundred and fifty men that took it . . .

Somebody hollered, 'The bloody ravine again! . . .'

We entered Belleau Wood in the face of a heavy German barrage. The ravine was in even worse shape than before and to add to the confusion the men of the —— Regiment kept breaking through our lines beating it back to the rear.

At first we didn't know who these men were who kept busting into us. We kept hollering, 'What outfit are you fellows with?' but no answer. Finally I grabbed a fellow. He didn't even have a rifle . . . in fact most of them that were running back did not have rifles . . .

'What outfit are you fellows with?' I yelled at him.

He was too scared to speak for a minute. Then he told me. It was the outfit that had been sent in to hold the line while we rested. The Germans threw a barrage in on top of them early that morning and they had been running ever since. Belleau Wood was about clear of Germans when we pulled out. Now the Germans had most of it again.

What we did not call that outfit was not worth mentioning, and we were not amateurs at bawling out, especially when it was some other outfit.

The woods were blacker than Billy-be-damned, and with this bunch of wild men charging down on us, it couldn't be helped if some of the —— Regiment ran into the bayonets of the Marines. Men were running along the top of the ravine and three of them jumped down into the ravine, landing in the midst of the group ahead of me. One man landed on top of a Marine's head, knocking him flat.

The cry went up, 'Germans!'

I ran my group up on the side of the bank, but we did not see or hear any more coming. By the time we got down, the fight up ahead was all over. Three men were stretched out dead on the ground. But they weren't Germans — they belonged to the —— Regiment.

We got out of the ravine and started forward through the woods, each group separate. The men traveled single file behind their corporal. The guide was right, but it was so dark in the woods that it was impossible even to see the man behind you. Your only guide was the cursing of the men on your right or left. When the cursing stopped, you knew the man was dead or nearly so.

Young was right behind me. Then came five new men, and taking up the rear of the group was Dale. The men had to keep closed up so as not to get lost. This bunching up made it bad, because when a shell hit it usually got the whole group.

The German barrage was crashing in on us all this

time and it was a mad scramble. Our own artillery could not help us out, as there was no established line and they did not know where to direct the fire.

We pushed on blindly. The fact that the German shells were still coming was evidence that the Germans themselves were not there. The only way to escape the barrage was to close with the enemy.

The shells stopped falling at last. We advanced more slowly. I tried to deploy my men on a line, but the ground was so uneven and the trees so thick that it was impossible, so I let them trail on behind. I could hear Murphy over on my right, but no sound came from my left.

It was still too dark to distinguish anybody. If there were any Germans lying around, they were up against the same blindness that we were. Our chances were equal in that respect. No one could see to fight.

When daylight came we found that we had a very uneven line. Some groups had penetrated far into the German lines — had even gone beyond the limits of Belleau Wood. Our platoon was close to the eastern edge, nearly opposite the town of Bouresches. There was heavy firing in back of us and to our left flank. We had to be careful not to fire into our own men. It was difficult to distinguish between your own men and the Germans in the early morning light. Each combat group had to look out for itself. In fact it was each man for himself. My group had a position on the edge of the woods with an open space in front. Across from us was another wood.

Leaving five men in this position, I took Dale and

Young with me off to our left flank. I wanted to try to establish a line on our left. I intended to go about two hundred feet. About fifty feet away from the group and slightly to the rear, I noticed two men. I pointed them out to Young and Dale and we agreed that they were Germans. They had their backs to us, lying down, but raised on their elbows. We all took careful aim with our rifles and fired. Both men slumped down. We crept carefully over. They were Germans and they had a light German machine gun with two cans of ammunition and over half a belt in the gun. We carried the gun and ammunition back to our position and set it up, but I didn't know how to work it.

Spud Murphy was in the group next to me on the right. I sent over for him. He was a corporal and so was I, but he knew the German machine gun pretty well and I wanted him to show one of my men how to operate it so it wouldn't jam.

As soon as Murphy saw the machine gun, he wanted it himself. I wouldn't let him have it. We argued back and forth awhile and then we agreed to put it up between our groups — he to operate it and one of my men to help with the ammunition. We agreed not to let the captain or any other officer see that gun. They would only take it away from us and then they would have something to play with.

I still lacked information about what troops were on our left, so the three of us, Young, Dale, and I, started out again. The ground sloped gradually away to our left, after we had got out about a hundred yards, leav-

ing a sort of deep depression or gully. We hesitated about crossing this, as it put us out of sight of our group.

There was a shell hole where we stopped and in it was a Marine and a German soldier, both dead. Judging from the condition of the trees and ground around the hole, they must have been under very heavy shell fire, and they must have both sought refuge in this same hole. Their rifles were lying beside them. Each held a half-smoked Camel cigarette in his hand. The rest of the package of cigarettes was in one of the Marine's cartridge-belt pockets. They had both been killed apparently from shrapnel from the same shell.

Seeing the two men like this reminded me of something that happened up in the old trenches near Verdun. I had crept out to a running stream to get a cup of water. This stream ran through No-Man's Land. Reaching the stream, I knelt down to fill my cup. Just then a star shell went up. Across the stream from me I saw a hand holding a tin cup in the act of filling it. Looking up, I saw a German soldier. He was looking at me. I raised my hand to my lips and said, 'Ssshh!' He nodded. He filled his cup. I filled mine. He went his way and I went my way.

It was still early and a slight mist hung over the woods so you could not see clearly at a very great distance. I was just deciding to extend our line down to this depression and still keep contact with Murphy on the right, when Young grabbed me by the arm and pointed to the left rear.

There I saw a large group of men moving toward us. A second glance and I saw that they were Germans. They were coming toward us and moving fast. We ran back to our group and I quickly swung my men around to face the left flank.

The leading Germans were just appearing over the crest coming out of the depression where we had just been. They were traveling diagonally toward us. The eight of us opened up. There were perhaps five Germans in sight, but there were more behind them. Some dropped and others ran toward the opening. Of these Murphy got most and his men got a few. Altogether we got fifteen. Some beat it back toward our rear. All these Germans were equipped in heavy marching order — that is, they carried heavy packs on their backs.

We held this position for a while in case any more Germans should show up. Then I crept forward with my whole group to the edge of the depression. There were no Germans in sight except those we had killed, and a few wounded, whom we bound up with first-aid stuff. I did not send any word back to Lieutenant McElroy who had charge of our platoon, as there was still firing going on in all directions and no line had been established.

My line was now extended down to this depression with a rather wide space between Murphy and me. The woods across from us ended about two hundred yards to our left, and I was anxious to get a look at the country beyond those woods, so I started out with Young and Dale again. We crossed down into the de-

pression and up on the other side. We were watching carefully, especially to the rear. We finally reached a spot on our side opposite to where the woods on the other side ended. I gave one look and my heart nearly jumped out of my mouth. Coming down the edge of those woods was the whole German army! We couldn't speak or move. As far as we could see was a stream of German soldiers coming our way, marching in close-order formation. From the hill up above Torcy I had witnessed the Germans going into position in this same massed formation.

We started at a run back to our position. At first it seemed best to remain quiet and drop back with the rest of the platoon. But by the time I reached the group, I had a different idea. I sent Dale on to McElroy to tell him that the enemy was advancing in great strength on our left. I told Young to warn our men not to open fire on the advancing troops. Then I hurried on to find Murphy.

He came trudging along with our machine gun on his shoulder and a can of ammunition in his hand. Behind him was one of his men carrying the tripod. I told him quick what was up. He was one of those light-haired Irishmen with rather pale blue eyes. His face seemed to quiver.

He said, 'Let's stop them.'

I didn't say a word, but took the can out of his hand and started back toward my group on a run. Murphy said, 'Where's the best place to set up?'

I pointed ahead to the point where the depression began. When we got there the head of the advancing

German troops was just starting to cross the opening. They were marching sort of diagonally away from us. My men were excited and looked anxiously at me.

Murphy saw the Germans crossing in front and got pretty excited too.

He said, 'The dirty bastards are getting away . . .'

I said, 'There are a lot more coming . . .'

I told my men to open up as soon as Murphy opened up. He got the tripod set and the gun mounted as fast as he could and the ammunition belt placed for firing. Then he got down behind the gun and sighted it up. He pulled the trigger. It shot once and quit. The trick of firing the machine gun was to pull two cartridges into the gun instead of one. In his excitement he pulled in only one. This made the gun single action.

In another second, however, he had it working right, and he held it open and the belt went bobbing through just like a piece of cloth passing through a sewing machine.

The German line stopped. The full width of the open space was strewn with Germans, all lying flat. Murphy's men came up on a run and I deployed them to the right. We still kept up a heavy fire. I told Murphy to direct his fire at the point where the woods across the way ended.

As I was pointing, my attention was attracted to a man across in the other woods. He was an American and waving frantically at me — I was the only one standing up. I couldn't figure out what he wanted, so I waved for him to come across, pointing back so that he wouldn't cross in front of the line of fire from Murphy's

men. I dropped back to see what he wanted. He kept shouting something at me, but I couldn't make it out until he was just about across.

He pointed wildly at the Germans lying up ahead.

'They're prisoners! . . . They're prisoners! . . .' was all he could say.

It was enough. I ran back to Murphy and stopped him just in time. He had just put in a fresh belt. I passed the word along to cease firing. The fellow who came across was sitting by a tree holding his head, saying,

'Oh, my God! . . . Oh, my God! . . . They're prisoners! . . .'

I sent a runner to McElroy telling him the troops reported advancing on the left were prisoners. Then I took a couple of men and the fellow that had come across from the other woods — he was from the Fifth Marines — and started out for the head of the column of prisoners.

Not a move was made by any of the men out in the open. Two Marines were at the head of the column with a German officer. They were still down. The officer had a box compass in his hand.

When we came up, the fellow with me from the Fifth Marines said, pointing at me: 'Here's the guy that shot up all our prisoners.'

The other two Marines got up and so did the German officer. One of the Marines said, 'What the hell is the matter with you? . . . Can't you tell prisoners when you see them?'

I said, 'How did I know they were prisoners?'

He said, 'Couldn't you see they weren't armed?'

Sure enough — they weren't armed! Some had caps on and some had helmets.

The Marines asked me then if it was all right for them to go ahead, and I said it was. Then one of them turned to the German officer and said, 'See, didn't I tell you you were surrounded?'

The officer didn't say anything, but he looked as if he understood English all right.

The German officer turned to his men and gave a command and they got up — that is, the ones in the woods did, the ones in the open did not. We walked back along the line out into the open. I thought they were all dead, but they weren't. All together there weren't over twenty dead and about the same number wounded. What saved the rest was Murphy's German gun jamming up at the go-off. They had all flopped at the first shot.

The Marines went on with their prisoners, taking the wounded with them; also the three wounded from below. There were about two hundred and fifty prisoners in the bunch.

I went back and told Murphy. He was sore at the few we had killed.

'Christ! if the damned gun hadn't jammed, I'd 'a' got 'em all!'

CHAPTER XII

A RUNNER came up ordering us to rejoin the troops on our right. They had moved farther to the right and front while we were killing prisoners. The day was bright and clear now, and we had to keep well within the woods so as not to be seen. The runner led us back to the same old ravine. Our platoon occupied the foremost part of the ravine, which ran parallel with the town of Bouresches.

I learned now that Lieutenant McElroy had been wounded the night before and that Captain Ladd, a new officer who had come up with the replacements, was in charge.

Murphy and I were assigned to positions at right angles to the ravine, right at the edge of the woods. These positions had been occupied before and had been fought over several times. Murphy and I had adjoining holes — ready-made ones. They were under a ledge of rock — it looked like flat curbing stone. Whoever made the holes had punched a round opening between them, so they could talk across.

One of my men was cleaning out a hole making it deeper and he drove his shovel through the belly of a dead buried German. He called me, making so much noise that I thought the Germans were making an attack. This one German raised quite a stink. I told the fellow to cover him up again thoroughly and get himself a new hole.

The air all through this section was heavily laden with rotten smells. The breeze that came in from out in front of us would knock you over. The dead had been lying out in the sun for nearly two weeks and it was hot. No regular burial detail was in operation at this time.

After dark, while Murphy and I were planting our pet machine gun on top of our holes and getting it all set for action, a runner came up and told me that Captain Ladd wanted to see me. I reported to his hole and found several of the lieutenants and sergeants gathered there too. Captain Ladd told me to take a detail of men and go out and bury all the dead I could find in front of our position, both American and Germans. The smell was getting too strong for the captain.

I went back and picked out six men — Allen, Dale, Cain, Jewell, Getty, and Crane — four with shovels and two with rifles. Orders were passed down the line that a working detail was out in front and not to fire at us.

The night was pitch dark. Now and then a star shell would light up No-Man's Land. We crept forward from our positions. The men with shovels had no other equipment on except gas masks and helmets. The men with rifles had extra clips in their pockets, thus doing away with belts, and no bayonets on the rifles. The less equipment they had, the less chance for noises.

I was leading and the men crept close to my heels, one behind the other. There wasn't much breeze stirring. I could not see the dead, but I could smell them, so I just had to follow my nose.

I came upon the first bulky form. He was lying with his back toward me. I felt around until I came on his square pack and knew he was a German. I told the men with the rifles to go forward about ten feet and keep a lookout. One of the fellows with a shovel whispered that there was a shell hole a short way back and we could drag the body back into it and cover it up. It would save digging a hole. I said all right.

So they rolled the body over on its back and two men grabbed a leg each and started to pull. They were sitting up on their haunches and they went over backwards, each with a leg in his hand — pants and all. The body was a little overripe and could not stand being pulled about. It was the first and the last one that we tried to drag anywhere.

The men got busy right there and dug a hole about the depth of the shovels — the short ones. They rolled the body over into it and it stuck. The hole was too narrow. So they all got on one side and lifted the body out again with their shovels. They widened the hole while I cut off the pack, which cut down the size at least eight inches. This extra handling of the body stirred up a few more choice odors. They now slid the body in with their shovels. I was afraid to have them roll it in again for fear it would come apart. We threw the legs in the hole, too, and covered it over.

The men were sweating, and cursing quietly.

We started forward again looking for the next one. One of the riflemen said he was sure he saw one over on his left. So I headed that way and came across another German. He was lying face down. The men got busy

and dug. I cut the pack off, and in a very short time we had him buried. We were experienced now. The secret was to have the hole wide enough and long enough. Then all you had to do was to roll the body into it. So far we had not been bothered with any star shells and our eyes were getting accustomed to the darkness. But the nose was still the best guide.

I scented something off to the right. The first thing I put my hand on was the mess-kit carrier with the mess kit still inside. I knew it was one of our men. He was lying on his face, and I turned him over on his back, as I had to open up his blouse and reach inside to get his identification tags. I had to cut the strings, as I was afraid to bend his head up for fear it would drop off. The fellows dug a respectable-looking hole and we laid him in, combat pack and all. His rifle and bayonet was lying close by, so I pulled off the bayonet, tied one of the tags to it, and stuck it over the grave. The other tag had to be taken back and forwarded to the Register of Graves.

Then another German. The fellows got the hole a little too short, and two of them had to hold the legs up while the other two lengthened the hole. It took only a few minutes.

The next was an American. He was face down. I turned him over and started to unbutton his blouse. It was stiff up around the neck and I had a hard time unhooking the collar. I had to kneel right over the top of him, straddling his chest. I finally got the blouse unbuttoned and the shirt opened. I felt for the tags. They were beneath his undershirt next the skin. I

tried to follow down the ribbon to which they were attached, but the shirt was stuck to his chest. The ribbons felt crusty. I didn't know just what to do. The tags would not pull up, and the neckband of the shirt was so stuck that I could not work it loose from the skin, although the skin felt soft enough.

Of course I was working as gently as possible. After the experience with that first German, I wasn't pulling at the dead any more than I had to. I finally got one finger under the neckband. Just then a star shell burst overhead.

We had to stay perfectly motionless while the light was on so as not to attract attention. I was straddling the dead man, my face about a foot from his. My left hand was supporting me and the right hand was partly under the dead man's undershirt. I tried to close my eyes, but that made me dizzy, so I kept them open. The face below me was half torn away. The eye on the other side was open and bulging out. Part of the teeth were exposed and the jagged edges of the bones of the face stuck out. The neck was partly laid open. You could see the cords and veins, but that was not the worst part of it. Millions of squirming white maggots made the whole torn section look like one quivering mass. This side of the face had been down next the ground. The back of my hand was resting in part of this mess. I had wondered why the skin felt so soft.

The star shell seemed to burn for hours. But gradually it died down and the place was pitch dark again. It always seemed much darker after a star shell.

I withdrew my left leg from the side of the body. No

more straddling for me. I pulled out my right hand and wiped it good in the grass. Then I got out my knife and slit a hole in the undershirt and cut the tags off rather short.

The hole was dug. I directed one fellow to put his shovel well under the head from the top — the helmet was gone — and two men to put their shovels under the body, and the other fellow to take care of the legs. So into the hole he went. There was a rifle with bayonet lying near by, but I could not get the bayonet off. The catch was rusted. So I stuck the bayonet into the ground full length, close to the top of the grave. This left the rifle sticking up. I tied one of the tags to the trigger guard.

We buried several more that night. I cut off all tags from our dead and didn't try to unhook any more collars. And I kept my hands away from the flesh as much as possible.

When I figured we had done enough for one night, I told the fellows we were going back. We were halted at our lines, but I told the sentry it was the working detail returning. After we got inside our lines, I told the fellows to clean their shovels good.

Then I went to Captain Ladd's hole. He told me to come in. I gave him a report of what we did. He kept sniffing suspiciously and eyeing me sharply all the time I was there. I pulled out the tags and asked him if he wanted them.

He said, 'No . . . Take them down to the top sergeant, and you had better report to your own sergeant right away that your detail is in.'

He seemed very anxious to get rid of me.

On the way to the Top Kicker I reported to the platoon sergeant, Strohm, that the working detail was back. He sniffed and said, 'All right . . . That's all . . .' and didn't ask me to stay to give any details.

I found the Top's hole and told him who I was and that I had the identification tags of the men I had buried. He said, 'Wait a minute . . . I'll come out.'

But he didn't. He stuck his head out and then pulled it back in again quick. Then he pushed out a sheet of paper and said, 'Here, put the tags in here and wrap them up good.'

I did as he directed. Then he said, 'That's all,' and waved me on.

I got back to my hole and crawled in. Pretty soon I heard Murphy, next door, say, 'Christ! what stinks in here?'

I did not say anything, but I began to be suspicious myself. My clothes simply reeked of dead man odors. I had not noticed it so much outside, but it got pretty strong in the hole. I crawled out of the hole and took off my blouse and hung it on a tree. I had an old slicker, so I took that and found a place in the open under the trees.

CHAPTER XIII

EARLY next morning we were awakened by heavy shelling. The woods in back of us were being raked with fire. I grabbed my blouse and beat it for my hole. It was not long before the shells were beating down on our positions. Our artillery began answering back. I called over to Murphy that it looked like a counter-attack.

I watched for signs of slackening fire and soon I noticed the shells were hitting more to our rear. Then I called Murphy and we crept out. I got my men out of their holes. Heavy rifle fire could now be heard on the right. The men in the forward part of the ravine had sighted the advancing Germans, and this gave us a good chance to get all set.

We had a good stretch of open ground in front of us, and it sloped up slightly toward the German lines. The Germans came in sight at about five hundred yards. I told my men to fire as soon as they could pick out a target. The Germans were in a bad fix at this spot. They had to face a direct fire from in front and a side fire from the ravine.

Murphy had our pet machine gun working, but the line of advancing Germans was very thin and gave him a poor target. The Germans came over in three waves, but no German reached our position. They did break through farther down on our left, and fighting continued in that section all morning.

We had orders to hold our positions and not to make any advance. The Fifth Marines on the left finally stopped the Germans and then drove them back for almost a kilometer, thus straightening out the line from Bouresches up the hills east of Belleau and Torcy. This cleaned Belleau Wood of Germans.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Platoons, which were in support and reserve positions, farther back in the woods, suffered worse than we did, because of the heavy artillery fire. The casualties of our platoon were very small.

But we did have one unusual casualty in our platoon. Norworth had dug his hole in the ravine under a large boulder that was sticking out of the bank. I saw the hole myself and looked in. He had dug down and under so that the bottom of the rock made a roof for his hole. It looked as if nothing could possibly reach him in there.

During the heavy morning shelling a shell struck just above his hole and tumbled the rock in on top of him. The fact was not discovered until after the attack was over and we were checking up on the casualties. The rock completely filled the hole and he was nowhere to be seen. A quantity of dirt had slid down along with the rock and unless you had known a hole was once there, you would never have suspected it now. Shovels were brought up and the dirt cleared away from the lower part. A small part of one of his shoes was uncovered, but that was all. We could not budge the rock.

A report was sent into battalion headquarters. Father Daroche, our regimental chaplain, Major Sibling,

and Dr. Michaels, of the Medical Corps, came up. It was decided to let that be his grave. A cross was painted on the rock.

Conroy was hit the same day.

Late that afternoon I was sitting in my hole when I heard a clankety-clank coming from the woods in our rear. Soon two men came in sight with a string of bare canteens over their shoulders. They were talking away as though there wasn't another person within a radius of a thousand miles.

Captain Ladd came out of his hole, and was he mad!

'Where the hell are you fellows going with those canteens?'

Men: 'Across to that town over there' — pointing to Bouresches — 'to get some water.'

Ladd: 'Who the hell said you were?'

'We did,' and they made a break to go on.

Ladd: 'You'll do no such damned thing! What outfit are you out of?'

Men: 'The Fifth Marines. We've been fighting all day long and the men are dying for a drink.'

Ladd: 'So have we been fighting all day. You or nobody else is going through this line with a bunch of rattling canteens. It's a give-away to our position. Go back and put the covers on the canteens and if you come up quietly I will let you go through.'

The men looked at one another and turned around and started back through the wood. I could hear one of the fellows say, 'Some damned doughboy outfit!'

We had no markings on us to show that we were Marines.

At this particular time we were not even allowed to cross over to Bouresches ourselves to get water. All the water was carried up from the rear and the canteens had to have their canvas covers on. The bare canteens sounded like a flock of bell cows running loose.

That night Ladd called me into his dugout and said, 'Here's a runner from the Twenty-Third Infantry, who occupy Bouresches.' He pointed to a fellow sitting in a corner. 'Go back with him to Bouresches and see the commanding officer and find out if it's all right for us to send men into town to get water.

The runner spoke up and said, 'It's all right to get water over there.'

Ladd said, 'You don't know anything about it . . . Go ahead and get started.'

We set out. First we had to go down the ravine practically to the end of our line, then we climbed up the bank and went out into the open field. Bouresches was about a half-mile distant. We started on a run. I was stripped for action — just an automatic and belt. The runner had a rifle and combat pack and the mess kit in the pack kept clanging. The cover and pan would bang together like cymbals. At regular periods a German machine gun would open up and sweep across the field. Three times we had to lie flat while the bullets cracked overhead.

As we neared the town the runner turned to me and said, 'We have to be careful not to get shot by the men on guard . . .'

I said, 'Don't you know the countersign? . . .'

'We haven't got any.'

We reached a stone wall and the runner climbed over. A couple of fellows rushed at him. He said, 'It's all right . . . I'm with the Twenty-Third.'

I climbed over then. The fellows said, 'You've got to be careful, sneaking in that way.'

The place looked familiar. Then I knew why. I was back in my own garden. It was the same stone wall I had guarded when we took Bouresches. But the buildings were all in ruins now — simply pulverized.

The runner led the way out the back gate, up a street to a barricade of stone. We went down into a cellar. He spoke to the man on guard and told him he wanted to see the captain. Stretched out on an old cot in the corner was a man sleeping. A piece of candle was burning. The runner went over and said, 'Captain!'

No move. Then he shook him. The captain showed signs of life.

The runner said, 'Here's a man from the Marines to see you.'

The captain said: 'What does he want?'

Then I spoke up and said, 'The captain of the Marines occupying the ravine to the left of the town wants to know if it's all right to get water over here.'

There was a moment's silence. Then the captain nestled down again and said, 'I guess so.'

The runner and I went out. I said, 'Where do you get your water now?'

He led the way around a wrecked building and

pointed to the same old fountain in the square that we had used. I sure was thirsty. I started over with a rush. The fountain was in the open. Another fellow grabbed my arm.

'Wait,' he said. 'They will be shooting in a second.'

He no more than got through talking when a stream of machine-gun bullets came crashing in. You could see them splashing in the water all around the fountain. Then it stopped and several fellows rushed out with cups and got them filled and came right back. They filled their canteens from the cups.

I borrowed a cup, as I did not have either a canteen or a cup with me. I made for the fountain and got back just in time. The machine gun was trained on this one spot and every few minutes it would open up. It knocked off quite a few every night. There was a guard stationed there to keep everybody away, but he could watch only one side. The old barricade we had made was gone.

I got back to our own lines O.K. and reported to Ladd that it was all right to get water in Bouresches, but that it was a dangerous proposition.

In the evening the chow detail would work its way up to us with a choice gunnysack of cold boiled potatoes with their jackets on and another sack of monkey meat or kangaroo meat. The cans with the blue stripes we called monkey meat and the cans with the red stripes kangaroo meat. They tasted alike. It was meat put up by some South American outfit for the French army, but the French soldiers wouldn't eat it, so they gave it to us. It was meat cooked with carrots. The meat was

very stringy, and how it would stick in your teeth! Usually we had to eat it cold. Once in a while we could stew it up in our cups with potatoes cut into it.

I was one of the few who could eat it and seem to like it. I would eat a can each for breakfast, dinner, and supper — three a day — and if I got hungry during the night I could go out in the woods and pick myself up a can of monkey meat anywhere. There was always a lot of it thrown away.

Once in a while we would get some goldfish or beans. That was a real treat. Bread was sent up regularly, and usually coffee. One evening the Germans dropped a shell in our coffee container and killed the two men who were carrying it up. No coffee that night. We growled over the lost coffee and didn't see why they couldn't send up another detail with more. On rare occasions a can of jam or syrup would come up for the captain. We also received a piece of chocolate quite often. I used to cook mine up with bread in my cup with a little water, and sugar it to taste. It made a swell chocolate bread pudding.

We ate when we were hungry and when we could get it.

Sergeant Strohm the next morning had a good one on himself. Every time you went by Strohm's hole you would have to be careful not to get hit with a shovelful of dirt. He was always digging. He would dig deep and then burrow away in under. It was hard getting word to him once he got the shovel working.

He said to me, 'Corporal, you saw my hole that I dug so nice?'

I said, 'Yes. Some cave.'

Strohm: 'I thought so too. I was dug in on a high bank. I dug down and then under. I like that kind of a hole. But I got out last night and looked around. I climbed up the bank and saw that the bank sloped rather sharply away in the back. I knew how my hole ran, so I kicked around with my foot a while at the foot of the hill and all at once my foot went through a hole — right back into my own hole! I felt funny. One more shovelful from the inside and I would have been out on the German side!'

'You shouldn't dig so deep.'

'Deep! I'll go deeper yet, but I'll know where I go next time!'

While in the old trenches in the hills up above the ruined town of Haudemont, with the factory chimneys of Metz smoking in the distance, Strohm and I stood talking one day. Strohm had been in the Marines about twenty-five years. We were looking in the direction of Germany, to the northeast. Strohm, pointing out over the valley below, said, 'I can almost see my home from here.' We turned and walked away. He had a strange look on his face, and I did not say anything. He had a brother in the German army.

CHAPTER XIV

I WAS sitting in my hole reading by a home-made candle made out of bacon grease and old rag wick. Murphy was lying on his back not far away.

Murphy said, 'What are you reading?'

'The Bible. Did you ever read it?' (I had a pocket-size Testament.)

Murphy said: 'I looked at one back in Tours when Hancock was shooting his head off about the Kaiser being the whore that sat on seven hills and caused the war . . .'

'That was a lot of cheap stuff,' I said. 'Hancock read it in some paper . . .'

Murphy: 'Well, if it's in the Bible I suppose it's true . . . Still I leave all that up to the priests . . . That's what they get paid for . . .'

I said: 'Remember how we used to argue with Hancock up in the old trenches about "He that kills by the sword shall perish by the sword"? . . .'

Murphy: 'Yes, and I still stick to what I always said — we haven't got any swords . . . and it doesn't say anything about machine guns and rifles . . .'

Just then one of the fellows came up and said Captain Ladd wanted to see me, so I went over to his dugout.

He said, 'Corporal, I have here some very important documents that the Intelligence Section just sent up.' He pointed to a bundle of papers on the ground. He

picked up a sheet and passed it to me. It was written in German.

He said, 'Can you read it?'

'No, sir.'

He said: 'Well, it doesn't make any difference . . . Neither can I, but here is what I want you to do with them. Pick out a detail of men — five or six — and tonight, about eleven o'clock, take these papers and distribute them inside the German lines in as open a space as you can find. We want the Germans to find them. Come in later and I'll give you the papers.'

I picked out six men — Young, Dale, White, Quinn, Bretherton, and Carney. I told them to be ready at ten-forty-five. No equipment was to be worn, I told them, except gas masks, and they were to be tied on securely so they wouldn't make a noise. No weapons were to be carried except an automatic revolver. Revolvers were furnished only to corporals and sergeants, so I had to dig around to borrow six of them, but I did. Extra clips would be carried in the pocket, as no belts could be worn. We were not a combat group or patrol and it was up to us to avoid any encounter.

A little before eleven I called in at the captain's hole and he gave me the bundle of papers. They were about the size of a regular book leaf, and were cheap paper, like newspaper stock.

The captain told us to go down the ravine to where the last man was posted and then cut across the field until we hit a main road which ran between Soissons and Château-Thierry. We would have to be careful along that road, as the Germans used it at night and

our artillery usually shelled it at regular intervals, but to-night they would not shell this part of the road in front of our positions between the hour of eleven-thirty and twelve-thirty. The captain suggested that along this road and the sides of the road would be a good place to distribute the papers.

It was about eleven-fifteen when I left and close to eleven-thirty by the time I reached the last man in the ravine. This was Hancock. I left my gas mask with him. It was always a bother, as no matter how you tied it down it would flop up, and, besides, it would hinder me crawling on my belly through the grass. The other men wanted to keep their masks, so I let them. I knew the lines were too close together to use gas.

We started across the field toward the road on our hands and knees, and as we got farther out we dropped flat and wriggled the rest of the way on our bellies. I was leading, the rest following fairly close behind. The German lines seemed restless. Star shells were going up right along; also signal lights for batteries — green and red. The artillery on both sides were firing away, trying to bust each other up.

We were snaking through grass which was about six or eight inches high and heavy with dew. We were soaking wet. It was slow work, as we had to stop crawling when the star shells were up.

I was looking straight ahead through the grass when all at once I found my head sticking out over a small embankment. About ten feet ahead was a road. I stopped. This road was inside the German lines and they had outposts in back of us, although their main

line was on the other side of the road in a wood similar to ours. I could hear a wagon creaking in the distance and soon a French two-wheeled wagon went by drawn by one horse. It was off the road on the grassy part alongside. It was headed north.

I gradually lowered myself down over the embankment. I told the next man to crawl along about ten feet and then come over. I sent one man one way and the next man the other and told them to get about ten feet apart before letting themselves down on the side of the road. Each one had some of the papers. I told them to keep down and scatter the papers out in front. Two of us crept out to the road and distributed the stuff as best we could for about two hundred feet along the road.

It did not take very long and we were soon crawling back. The path was easy to pick out, as the grass was all flattened out. It was about twelve-fifteen when we got back. I got my gas mask from Hancock and reported back to the captain.

I had saved one of the sheets, and the next day I got Eberle to translate it. It went something like this:

TO THE GERMAN SOLDIER:

The people of the United States are still friends of the people of Germany. The United States did not enter the war to fight the German people. We are at war with the German Military Power which is trying to murder the people of the world the way they are murdering you. You are being deceived by them. Here is an offer that we make to you. Every German soldier who will lay down his arms and enter our lines of his own free will will be furnished free transportation to the United States and will be given a large piece of rich

farm land that he can work for himself. We have plenty of good land and can take care of you all.

I can't remember how it was signed.

That night I heard Murphy getting a patrol together. He came to borrow my automatic for one of his men. I told him I would be on guard from 1 to 3 A.M. and would need the gun, so he said he would have it back to me by that time.

About a quarter to one I went down to the top sergeant's hole to see if he had any orders. His hole was right next to the captain's and there was an opening between them just as between Murphy's and mine. I was just about to go when I heard somebody slide into the hole next to me and start to talk in an excited voice. It was Murphy.

He said, 'Lookit, Captain! . . . I picked up a whole bunch of German orders that somebody dropped along the road!'

There was a rattling of papers for a minute. I looked through the hole and saw Murphy pulling little papers out of all his pockets.

Then the captain spoke. 'German orders, hell! These are the papers I sent out last night to be distributed in the German lines. And you had to go out and pick them up again ——!'

'Well, my orders were to pick up any information about the German lines I could, and as soon as I spotted these papers along the road and saw that they were written in German, I figured some dispatch runner had dropped them.'

'Did you get any information about the German positions?'

'No, sir, nothing but these papers. It took us quite a while to pick them up.'

'I guess you got them all all right.'

Murphy went out and I followed. When I caught up with him, I started to bawl him out.

I said, 'What did you want to go and pick up all those German papers for when I had such a hard time scattering them along the road?'

Murphy said, 'So you're the guy that did it?'

'Yes, didn't we do a good job?'

'Too damned good! We crawled along that road for over an hour on our hands and knees picking them up. Next time put them all in one pile.'

CHAPTER XV

ORDERS came up from Third Battalion Headquarters for us to stand by to move out at midnight. We were to be relieved.

One of the things we hated worst was making a change in position — either taking over a new position or leaving an old one. The Germans always seemed to know when these reliefs were being made and they always furnished lots of fireworks.

At 11 P.M. the German artillery started to hammer away at our positions. Our artillery was banging away trying to silence the Germans. Between the two of them you couldn't hear yourself think.

A few minutes to midnight our relief showed up. We crawled out of our holes. They crawled into them. I could not see the face of the man who relieved me. He could not see mine. No orders were given. No words were spoken. None were necessary. There is one order at the front. It is known to all. Hold the line.

Back down the ravine we went, the Germans still shelling it. Our relief had come up the ravine and had left a trail of dead and wounded. Now we were leaving our trail of dead and wounded. It seemed there were always dead lying or wounded crawling around in that ravine. The Germans knew we used it and they could drop a shell into any part of it. But at that it was the safest place to travel. The northern bank of it was a regular honeycomb. You could always find a hole to

duck into. Besides that, it was a guide. If our line got broken, the men ahead kept going and the men behind caught up when they could. The word would come, 'The rear can't keep up.' Word would go back, 'Who the hell cares?' or, 'Tell them to follow the ravine.'

We called this ravine Ma Sibling's Trench because Major Sibling was always hanging around in it somewhere. This night, as we passed the first-aid station in the ravine, we saw Dr. Michaels, the battalion surgeon. Major Sibling had been hit.

We traveled back the full length of the ravine to Lucy-le-Bocage. The town seemed more ruined than ever. While passing a corner near a church, we ran into a bunch of whiz-bangs. How they would come! They were fired from the Austrian 88 — it always seemed that that gun firing was right on top of us.

The whiz-bangs to-night tore up the tail-end of our company, killing eight of our new men. We had to lie on the side of the road for a half-hour while a steady stream of these whiz-bangs whizzed over us.

When we got started again we went fast. Our route lay along the borders of various patches of wood. We were traveling single file. The head of the column came across a wire. Word came back, 'Look out for the wire.' Every man started to look for a wire — some of us were over a block away from it. We went feeling along in the dark. We didn't know whether it was a high wire or a low wire. By the time we reached it, we had given up looking for it. Then we stumbled over it. After three or four wires were passed — some of them we broke — they got a better system. A man was

posted at the wire who either held it down or up while we passed.

While passing the road near the tall pyramids, a shell crashed close to our line up ahead. I heard a voice yell, 'I'm hit in the crock! . . . I'm hit in the crock! . . .' I could tell that voice a mile. It was Calahan's. As we passed by, several fellows had gathered around, and I heard Calahan saying, 'Jesus Christ, I can't walk! . . . If I could walk do you suppose I'd be lying here? . . .'

It was getting daylight when we crossed the Paris road and entered the woods in the rear of the batteries of 155s. Our galley was steaming away and Nagel was standing beside it.

He hollered, 'Chow is ready!'

CHAPTER XVI

Our position in the rear of these batteries of 155s was a mean one. Every evening they would open up and shell the back areas of the German lines, especially road crossings and artillery positions.

Just as soon as they would open up, the Germans would begin answering back. Then the duel was on. The Germans knew from the flash and the sound just about where our batteries were located. The shells they used were of the real large caliber — ash cans. It seemed to us that they would all drop back where we were. And no hole was deep enough to escape those shells.

One good thing about the front-line positions was that the shells used against them were of a smaller size, usually the three-inch. These did not bore in so deep. But in the back areas they went deep and wide.

We sure would curse out our artillery for opening up.

CHAPTER XVII

EARLY in the morning of July 3 we left our positions near the Paris road and hiked down to a point between Sainte-Aude and Nanteuil-sur-Marne, on the Marne River.

Orders were to take a bath and wash clothes. We did not have a change of underwear or socks, so first we scrubbed clothes and while they were drying we took our bath and went in swimming. It was the first bath we had had in months.

I washed my dog-tag ribbon and hung it on a tree, tags and all. After our clothes were dry, we got out and dressed. Orders came to fall in, and we marched away toward Sainte-Aude. I left my dog tags hanging on the tree.

Outside of Sainte-Aude we fell out, but were instructed to stick around and be ready to fall in at a moment's notice.

There were other companies of the Third Battalion here also, and we got to chewing the rag with them. One of the men had some newspapers. Among them was a Paris edition of the 'Chicago Tribune,' dated back in the early part of June. It had big headlines:

'U.S. MARINES SAVE PARIS'

This was news to us. We ganged around while somebody read the paper aloud. We were wondering what Marines they were talking about. We were supposed

to be the only Marines in France. As we listened to the account, it gradually dawned on us that *we* were the Marines they were talking about.

It took us but a short time to convince ourselves that the paper was right and we accepted everything it said as true.

There was also an item in the paper, 'Huns call Marines "Devil Dogs."' That was something else we had never heard about. We got quite a kick out of that, and went around slapping one another on the back saying, 'O you little Devil Dog!'

We were having one hell of a time when orders came: 'Fall in without equipment.'

We lined up for inspection. The officers passed down the line, and they would say to certain men, 'Drop back.' The inspection lasted but a short time and then we were dismissed again.

This inspection puzzled me, so I moseyed around to find out what it was all about, and I found out:

To-morrow was the Fourth of July! A detail of Marines, right hot from the front lines, was to be rushed to Paris in camions and pull off a big parade! They were to be headed by a banner reading, 'Saviors of Paris!'

Murphy and I went over to see the bunch that had been picked from our company to go to Paris. We were figuring on slipping some francs to somebody we knew and having him bring us back a bottle of cognac.

But we did not know one of the fellows. They were all new men who had come in the day before with a bunch of replacements. They still had nice new clean

uniforms. The officers picked the men with the best-looking uniforms in order to make a showing in Paris. There was no chance of them picking us, as our uniforms were wrinkled and messy from flopping around mud-holes.

I went back and said to Strohm: 'Say, Strohm, that bunch they picked to go to Paris has never been near the front.'

And Strohm said: 'I know it, but they've got uniforms. The people in Paris will never know the difference.'

Camions pulled in and our new men piled in. We watched them ride away toward Paris. We fell in and hiked back toward the front.

CHAPTER XVIII

We heard that a new division was coming in to relieve us, and as soon as I got a chance I asked Nagel if this was so.

Nagel said: 'Yes, — the Twenty-Sixth Division is coming. I met one of their supply sergeants to-day and their galleys should be here in the morning.'

'When are we shoving off?' I asked.

'I got orders to pack to-night and be ready to shove off right after chow to-morrow morning.'

'Did you hear where we are headed for?'

'I don't know the name of the place, but it can't be very far because we are not drawing any extra rations.'

'Any place for a change.'

'Yes, we've been here for over a month now. Besides those damned mules have gnawed the bark off of every tree around here . . .'

'Did you ever try feeding them monkey meat?'

'Hell, they wouldn't eat it . . . How did you fellows ever eat it?'

'We didn't — most of it is still lying up there in the woods . . . Where did it all come from?'

'The French unloaded it on us. We're attached to the French army, you know. Their own men wouldn't eat it, not even their niggers or Chinks.'

'Are those two mules the same ones you started out with?'

'Yes, and they're a wise pair. They'd be over there

gnawing on a tree and just as soon as our batteries in front of us would open up, the mules would stick their ears up and look this way. If I made a break for my gas mask, over they would come for theirs. I'll bet the three of us have had our masks on every night since we've been here. The Germans would always shell us with gas right after our batteries opened up.'

The next morning we fell in and hiked to the town of Bézu-le-Guéry. Up on a hill outside this town we took up reserve positions in rear of an American division. We dug a complete system of trenches, north, along a road leading up toward Ventelet Farm.

We had regular positions assigned to us which we were to occupy in case the Germans broke through the line up ahead. Every time a barrage was turned loose, we would drop whatever we were doing, grab our rifles and belts, and rush to our positions.

There was a large hospital in the town of Bézu-le-Guéry and they had a small canteen just for the accommodation of convalescent soldiers. They wouldn't sell to outside outfits such as ours.

It opened at certain hours to sell stuff — cigarettes, chewing, candies, cookies. We tried to buy things at this canteen several times and couldn't, so then we doped out a system. The men that had been wounded would go limping around on canes or with bandaged arms and heads. We borrowed canes or used our first-aid kits to bandage up our arms or heads and then we limped over to the canteen window and bought whatever we wanted.

God Have Mercy on Us!

Three or four of us were walking along the road just outside of town — the main road leading in from the southwest. We noticed a stone building at the left and one of the fellows ran down and looked in a window. He hollered for us to come down. We went down and looked in. It was more than half full of arms and legs. They covered the whole area up to the windows. Some had leggings on and some were bare. There were arms from the wrist up to the shoulders. Some legs had blue leggings on, but more had khaki. They were dumped there from the hospital.

The German lines were north and east of us.

On the morning of July 16 we slung packs and were on our way. First we went up a steep hill, then down a long winding road. The hillside below us was tiered up and laid off in truck gardens and flower plots. French people were working in the gardens. They were the first civilians we had seen for a month and a half.

We were headed southwest.

CHAPTER XIX

☜ CHÂTEAU-THIERRY — PARIS ☞

That's what was on the stone markers along the road. Our whole battalion occupied a park-like space on the banks of the Marne, which ran parallel to the road bearing these markers.

The only name we could see was Paris. We heard that at last we were going to Paris for our long-expected leave, that we were to have at least a month, and that a special area right near Paris had been assigned to us.

Late in the afternoon — nearly dusk, July 16 — a line of pale gray camions was seen coming over the hill from the east. We watched them pull in like so many ghosts. They seemed to stretch out for miles. They came to a halt.

Soon whistles were blowing and orders were given to fall in with all equipment. This was even better than we expected. We were not only going to Paris, but we were going to ride there.

We lined up in a column of twos alongside the camions with their same old Hindu-god drivers.

'Come on, you men, get aboard the camions. Sergeant' — I had been made an acting sergeant — 'take charge of this group.'

We packed in, about twenty of us, and shoved our equipment as far forward in the passageway as we could. I had the end place on one side near the door.

In an hour we were on our way, headed for Paris. We sang our favorite songs and were in general good spirits.

Dale said: 'I wonder will they pay us when we get to Paris?'

Murphy: 'Boy, I'm going to get drunk and stay drunk!'

Allen: 'We sure rate this rest. We were supposed to go to Paris after we pulled out of the old trenches . . .'

Young: 'The only rest we'll get will be in some grave.'

It was a starlit night. We were traveling in a southwesterly direction. Looking away to the rear I could see star shells and signal rockets still going up. They seemed small and dim from this distance. The artillery had a hollow booming sound — not the crash that is heard at the front.

Our camion came to a sudden halt. The one in back of us closed in and stopped with a creaking of brakes. They had no headlights. We crossed a bridge, and then I noticed a change in direction. We swung off the beautiful smooth white Paris road onto another road — a gravel and dirt road. Out of the end of the camion I watched the white road fade away in the distance. I did not say anything, but I felt a creepy sensation in the back of my neck.

The new road was rougher and had many chuckholes in it, which jarred us up. Some of the fellows that had been sleeping now woke up.

Somebody said: 'I wonder is that damned Chinaman off the road . . . They are always half asleep.'

The road seemed to wind considerably, but I knew the general direction. We were traveling north. The shelling off to our right began to grow plainer. I tried to doze off when suddenly — crash! — the camion stopped dead. We were pitched forward. Some of the fellows fell into the passageway. I jumped out and ran up front. The driver still sat there, motionless as a Buddha.

I said, 'What's the matter?'

Then I saw. A shell had burst in the road up ahead. There were four camions in front of ours. A fifth one was lying on its side in the ditch. There was a big hole at one side of the road. A gang of men was milling around the overturned truck. Then a voice was heard.

'All right, you men, get back in your trucks! This road is under fire and the sooner we get off of it the better.'

It was language we understood and there was a mad scramble back to the camions. Some of the men had a hard time finding their own trucks. I chased two fellows out of my truck who did not belong there. They tried to argue that they did belong there.

I said, 'What company are you out of?'

They said, 'Eighty-Fourth.'

'This is the Ninety-Seventh Company's truck.'

Shells whizzed overhead and burst in the fields at the side of the road. We all crammed our heads out of the door as we passed the overturned camion. A few men were standing around it and we could see many dark figures on the bank alongside of it.

For the next hour we rode under heavy shell fire. At

times we would stop and pull up alongside the embankment. Then we would go forward at a great speed. One truck would go at a time. This was at crossroads, where the shelling was heaviest. I began to admire the Chink drivers because they *could* go if given a chance.

All night long we bumped over this road. The fellows did not have much to say. They knew by now that this was not the road to Paris.

The next morning we were still rattling along. Every few hours we were allowed to stop and get out to stretch our legs. We passed through the town of Dammartin that day and it was in flames. There had been an airplane raid the night before. The town was in ruins. We had a hard time getting through the streets on account of the wreckage.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, in a flat, dusty country, the camions came to a stop. Orders were passed to fall out with equipment. We were at our journey's end as far as the camions were concerned.

Our water was all gone and we had not eaten since the day before. The heat was fierce, and the gray dust of the road rose in clouds from the passing camions. We sat until all the camions had passed. We watched them disappear in the dust. They were the same color.

Then we fell in. We hiked along this dusty road for nearly a kilometer, then took a road off to our right. We were carrying full packs. And it was hot! The dust was even thicker on this road. The men were growling for water, for food, for rest.

We hiked for hours steadily — no five- or ten-minute

rests at the end of the half-hour or hour. We just hiked. There was no straggling.

At one place, alongside the road, stood a man and a girl — the man on one side of the road, the girl on the other. They were from some welfare organization. They had sticks of gum in their hands and they tried to pass them out to the men as we marched by. They ran alongside. The fellows would make a grab for the gum. Some would try to break ranks. Then you would hear the sergeants — 'Get back in those ranks!' The men kept asking them for water. The girl said, 'Sorry, but this is all we've got.'

Far in the east — the way we were headed — we could see the dark outline of a wood. We were out in the open country, in the hot sun, and the sight of the trees, although a long way off, gave us hope. No men fell out in this open country.

The sun was setting before the head of the column entered the wood. It seemed as though they were being swallowed up in the shadows. Men would strain their necks to look ahead and they would say, 'How near are we?' We all hoped there would be a place for us under some tree.

We entered the wood at last. The men looked to the right and left. They began to try to break ranks again. Standing beside the road were officers from battalion headquarters. They were shouting to the passing company commanders: 'Don't let your men fall out along this road. The whole division is behind you.'

The word came down the line from the captain, 'Pass the word back that no man is to leave the ranks.'

Then the lieutenants would tell the sergeants, 'See that none of your men fall out.'

We stopped. Men sat down, but the word came back, 'Form column of twos to the right of the road.'

Some of the men crept over to the side of the road and stayed there. Most of them got up and went forward. So far as I was concerned, they could all fall out. I was wishing they would. Then I could fall out too.

There was a road coming in from the right and another from the left. Artillery was coming up from the right. They crossed our line and swung into the middle of the road. That crowded us over more, as we had to keep out of the way of the horses. Our line broke at this point because the men had to duck in between the artillery to get across. They finally caught up.

Another column of foot soldiers came moving in from the road on the left. They traveled along the left side of our road. I got a good look at them after a while and saw that they were English soldiers.

It was the first time that we had ever marched down the same road with the English to battle. Usually our experience with English troops was in some railroad yard. They would be pulled up on one track and we on the next track, both in box-cars. Then the wise cracks would begin. We would yell:

'Would you have a bit of tea?'

Then we'd get rougher: 'Go on, you damned English; you don't know how to fight!'

Then the English would yell, 'Ah, you come over now when it's all over!' and, 'Why didn't you come four years ago?'

Then we would remind them how we knocked hell out of them during the Revolution. We would keep it up as long as they were in sight. Usually the English soldiers would try to be a little sociable at first, but not us. Our vocabulary of coarse words was never put to such a task as when we met the Limeys. Three, four, and more dimensional cusswords were the rule.

But the English soldiers trudging along the other side of the road in the forest of Villers-Cotterets that evening were not met with any wise cracks. It seemed good to have them along.

The road through the woods led through swampy places at times and here the road was of the corduroy type. The logs that had been laid down, although the spaces between had been filled with dirt, were wet and slippery. The horses of the artillery would slip and fall and we would have to jump for our lives. This would tie up the lines and cause great confusion. The artillerymen would holler over to us,

'Hey, you fellows on the side, give us a hand to get this caisson off the road!'

But we just kept right on going. We were not giving a hand to anybody.

Around midnight our company was steered over to the side of the road and orders were passed around to take off packs. I had my pack off in a second and was lying down with my head on it.

The lieutenant came over and said, 'Sergeant, how many men have you got?'

I said: 'I don't know. They are all mixed up with the other platoons.'

'A great many men fell out along the road. You will have to go back and round them up and get them assembled here. We'll be here for some time, so you can leave your pack if you want to.'

I unhooked my belt and turned my pack and rifle over to one of my men. I felt much better with my pack off and even the short rest helped a whole lot.

I started back down the road. Groups of men were sitting along the road bank. I hollered to them, 'Any Ninety-Seventh Company men there?'

No answer.

Then I would continue, 'The Ninety-Seventh Company is located down the road to the right.'

Then I went on. Men were spread out all along the side of the road. I went back as far as the crossroads. The artillery was still moving up. So were the English soldiers and groups of French cavalry with long spears.

On the way back I caught a glimpse of light shining through the woods from the left. I ducked through the line and went over to see what it was. I saw two big tents, and when I found the entrance I heard voices inside.

One said, 'You can't fill your canteens here, but you can take a drink.'

I slipped in the entrance into a sort of vestibule and there was another canvas hanging down to block off the light. I looked in. There was a bunch of fellows around a big canvas water bag that was hanging down between poles. I pulled out my canteen, then my cup, and went in.

The bag had five or six small faucets on it — the

kind you push. I got to one faucet and filled my cup, then dropped back. I didn't drink that water; I just poured it down my throat. I went back for another, got it, and drank it. I could taste the chlorine in the second cup, but the first cup had no taste.

I looked around the tent and could see that they were arranging cots. It was a field hospital. I took another cup of water and carried it outside and poured it into my canteen.

When I got back to the company, practically all the men had turned up. We moved a little farther back into the woods. It was very quiet back there. No firing of any kind. I opened my pack, broke out a blanket, rolled up in it, and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XX

How long I slept I don't know, but I woke up with a start. Day was beginning to break. It had rained and I was lying in a puddle of water. Something was happening, but I could not figure out what it was. There was one great roaring noise in my head. I looked around and saw the bushes in front of me waving under a hard wind, but I could not feel the wind.

I got out of my blanket and crept over to one side where I saw some other fellows. They were as dazed as I was. As my mind cleared a little, the roar changed to terrific explosions, close to us, and yet there were no shells falling.

We crawled back farther into the woods, and there, in an opening, was a battery of 155s. They were blazing away for all they were worth. They were producing the wind that shook the trees. We had been sleeping about twenty-five feet in front of their muzzles.

I went back and got my wet blanket and equipment from under this battery fire and went on a hunt for something to eat. Kennedy, the mess sergeant, was over in a sort of hollow. Our supply wagons had come through, but not the rolling kitchen.

The mess sergeant had some galvanized cans and was cooking coffee in them over an open fire. The wood was wet and he was having a hard time. He went through his supplies and found some tomatoes and a few cans of jam. He also had a couple of square

cans of evaporated potatoes. He told us he had no way of cooking the potatoes, but if we wanted them we could have them. Dried raw potatoes do not make a very good breakfast. I tried some of them. It was like eating so much wood.

This was the morning of July 18, 1918, the date of the big drive on the German lines between Soissons and Château-Thierry. The artillery had opened up about 4 A.M. Without any preliminary firing everything opened up with one big bang.

A short distance from where we were was a large stone building. It was being used as a dressing station and a concentration camp for prisoners. As early as seven-thirty in the morning this place was jammed — wounded men, both Germans and Americans, were stretched all over. Long rows of prisoners stood or sat along the road leading up to the building. Ambulances were coming and going. German stretcher-bearers, under guard, were carrying in the wounded also.

As the prisoners passed by, we would say, 'Finish!'

Some of them would shrug their shoulders. They did not seem to be worrying much.

Murphy, Young, and I strolled out to the edge of the woods to see what was going on. It was a new thing for us to be looking on at the war from the side lines. As I reached the last trees, Young, who was ahead, yelled, 'Hurry up! if you want to see something . . .'

And there, across a great stretch of open rolling country in front of us, swept the French cavalry! On came the first wave in perfect formation, horses at full gallop, each trooper carrying a long lance with colored

ribbons flying from the spear-like head. Stretched out to the left as far as the eye could see came wave after wave. . . . Up the hill they came, over the top, and down . . . Then they would appear on the next hill with never a break . . . Shells burst in their midst . . . Horses and riders would go down . . . But the line went forward, always forward, at a steady gallop . . . It was a real battle-scene, the kind you read about in books. As Young said, it looked like the 'Charge of the Light Brigade.'

This was a new kind of war to us.

CHAPTER XXI

WHEN we got back to the company, our rolling kitchen was there and the cooks were preparing food. They were short of water, and I was put in charge of a detail of six men and told to find water somewhere.

We had two large containers and a bucket. I went over to the large stone building where the wounded were. There was a pump there, but a guard had been placed around it and nobody was allowed to use it. It had been pumped dry and they were waiting for it to fill up again.

From where I had watched the advance of the French cavalry I had noticed a farmhouse at some distance on the left. We started for that place. We passed a road that was lined up solid, hub to hub, with French 75s. I never saw so many in one place. They were loading and firing as fast as they could.

When we reached the farmhouse, we saw one big confusion of horses and men. I went forward to see where the water was. In a shed-like structure, with a sloping cement floor and fairly high cement walls, but no roof, I found the only water there was. A pipe ran in from the side which carried in the water. The slope in the floor was about two feet. The place was about ten feet wide and ten feet back to front. The horses were standing with their front feet in the shallow water near the front edge and were sucking up the water. Men would creep in between the horses and dip up

water with their cups to fill their canteens. The water was roily and muddy-looking. The only clear spot was right at the spot where the pipe entered. The horses — they were from the artillery — were lined up for some distance back waiting their turn for a drink, and the way they did suck it in! They were dry!

The chances of our getting water for our containers looked poor. There were too many ahead of us. I went up toward the house. A pump was there, but it was broken. Several fellows were trying to fix it.

I went into the house and scouted around. After a while I found a good-sized length of rope. It gave me an idea. I took the rope back to where my men were and we went around in back of the water shed. The wall in back was eight or nine feet high. Several pieces of lumber were lying near by and we leaned them up to the top of the wall. Reed, one of the fellows with me, climbed up and flung his leg over the top of the wall. He had tied one end of the rope to the strap of his gas mask. We tied our bucket to the other end of the rope. He pulled up the bucket and dropped it over the other side of the wall into the water. Then he drew it up full of water and passed it down to the other fellows, who emptied it into the containers.

We got all the water we wanted, such as it was. Somebody wanted to borrow the bucket when we got through, but no hope! I gave them the rope and they tied their canteens to it and filled them that way.

It was a mean job carrying the water back to the company, as the containers were heavy. The continual jolting kept the water well stirred up. When we reached

our outfit, I told Nagel to let the water settle a little as there was sand in it.

He said: 'That's all right. When it's boiled up with a little coffee in it, you'll never know the difference.'

CHAPTER XXII

ABOUT four o'clock in the afternoon we knew our time had come. We slung packs and moved out of the woods and across the open field to the east. Prisoners and wounded men were still coming in. Toward dark we entered another wood on a hill where we were to stay for the night. We did not dig any holes, but simply lay on top of the ground. Orders were passed, 'No lights!'

Then began a night of nightmares and no sleep. Overhead the German planes circled about and dropped bombs. Never did motors hum so vengeful and wicked. It's not a pleasant way to spend the night — lying on your back, looking up into the sky, and expecting every minute to have a half-ton bomb hit you in the eye. If you turn over, it seems worse. When you are looking up, you figure you've got a chance to duck.

We were up at daybreak the next morning. Orders were passed to make up combat packs and fall in. We knew what that meant. The order 'combat packs' means 'battle'!

Spud Murphy was next to me fixing his pack and I asked him whatever became of our skipper, Captain Vare.

Murphy said, 'He was made a major and put in charge of the Third Battalion right after Sibling was wounded in Belleau Wood, and he still has charge of it.'

Some of the fellows were getting good-natured and were trying to give away their extra junk. They would holler:

'Anybody want a pair of socks?'

'Here's some extra underwear.'

About the only answer they got was, 'What the hell do we want with them now?'

Spud picked up his roll and carried it over to a tree that looked as though it had been hit by a cyclone. It made a good landmark.

Spud said, 'Hey, Nap, stick your roll over by this tree with mine so we'll be able to find it when we get back . . .'

'Wait until that salvage detail gets through and you won't have to worry about rolls . . .' called out Eberle. 'They're waiting for us to shove off . . .'

Then McFadden piped up. 'That's so . . . You'll never see that roll again, Spud . . .'

Murphy: 'The hell I won't! . . . I got a brand-new cap in that pack that needs christening and cognac will do it. I've got three months' pay coming and Paris is going to catch hell . . .'

We left the woods in a column of two, moving directly east. We came to a road which led down into a dark valley. A thick mist hung over this valley. The air was heavy and had a tinge of mustard in it. Orders were passed back to put on gas masks. This made it all the more miserable.

As we went down, the floor of the valley spread out and disappeared in the mist. Off to the right of the road I noticed a number of strange, mound-like figures. It

was difficult to make them out through the misty eye-pieces of the gas mask, so I slipped my mask off, leaving the pinchers on the nose and the rubber in my mouth.

It was a sad sight my eyes took in. The French cavalry I had watched yesterday, galloping over the hills to battle with lances held high and ribbons flying, now lay dead before me. Lying close together, side by side, was the Frenchman and his horse — not one or two, but hundreds! They were stretched out all over the field as far as I could see for the heavy mist. I had a sort of choking feeling in my throat — and it wasn't from gas either.

But there was something queer about their appearance that I couldn't quite make out from the road. I stepped over and examined more closely. Then I saw. Each Frenchman had his gas mask on and each horse had his gas mask on. I looked closer. They weren't dead. They were sleeping calmly. A horse with a gas mask on is a funny sight.

Gradually the road wound up and out of the valley. After reaching the highlands, we took off our masks. Over on the right rose steep banks and we headed straight for them. At the foot of these banks ran a double-track railroad. The hill had been cut down to make a road-bed. We crossed the tracks and climbed up the bank. A narrow wagon-road ran alongside the hill parallel to the tracks. The road widened out at places and there were deep cuts in the hill. At these places were batteries of deserted German field pieces with stacks of ammunition. We passed battery after

battery. Those shells marked with yellow stripes were mustard-gas shells, and there was a lot of them.

German dead lay thick along this road and near the battery positions. You could see where a shell had hit in a stack of shells. They were scattered all about. There were several mangled forms among these shells. Most of the dead were elderly men.

In a small dugout in the hill sat a live German soldier with his back to the wall and one leg up on a board. The leg had been shattered. He called for help as we passed, but we went on. All about him were piles of empty shells. The guns still had their mouths pointed to the west.

The sun was now up and the mist in the valley down below the railroad track was rapidly clearing away. The birds were singing. High up above us, on the ridge, moving in the same direction that we were, was a long string of artillery. They seemed to be in a hurry.

The railroad was now running level with us. There was a break in the hills on our right with a divide between them, out of which came a road. The road crossed ours and ran down under the railroad through a tunnel and out across the valley below. A gun was placed on this road with its muzzle pointing directly into the tunnel. There was a heap of empty shells all around it. On the other end of the tunnel and far down into the valley were the torn, mangled forms of Frenchmen and their horses. These were dead all right! In places they were piled in heaps.

We passed on and into the town of Vierzy. This had been a good-sized town, but now it was a total wreck.

The Germans had occupied it for a long time. The streets all had German names and the dugouts had German names at the tops.

We passed out of Vierzy on a road leading to the south. We rested along the low stone wall of a cemetery. Troops were moving back and forth along this road. Officers passed by. They seemed excited. One was saying: 'How can we attack without artillery? . . . The artillery have not reached their positions . . .'

We fell in again and headed south. About a fourth of a kilometer more and we halted again. Word came for the platoon officers to report to the captain. Soon they came back. The platoons were separated. We marched up ahead about two hundred feet and turned off the road into a wheat-field. We crossed this field to another road. It was a wide temporary road that had been made through the wheat. It ended on our right at a large airdrome. The airdrome was on fire. Outside of it three airplanes were standing. After crossing this road, which was really a landing- and starting-place for planes, we split up and formed our combat groups.

Tanks now come up from the rear and pass through us. The German artillery swings into action with a vengeance. Most of the fire is directed at the tanks, but as usual they shoot high and the shells burst among us. We curse the tanks.

We move forward . . . The tanks are about three hundred yards ahead . . . The German artillery and machine guns are working fast . . . And there is no sound in back of us of our artillery answering . . . The wheat through which we are moving is full grown . . .

We advance continuously, at a walk, without getting down . . . Our bayonets are held down, so they will not flash in the sun . . . They get tangled up in the long wheat and we have to tug to get them loose, pulling up the wheat . . .

The machine-gun fire encountered before the town of Bouresches was bad but the fire now is a thousand times worse. . . . It is like a hailstorm . . . My body is bent forward as though forcing myself through a heavy rain . . . My free hand clutches my blouse, pulling it tighter about my body . . . There are little crooked paths through the wheat . . . At the end of each little path lies a dead soldier . . . They would be hit, then stagger, and drop . . . The bullets mow down the wheat . . .

Sergeant McFadden has the group next to me, on the left . . . He is leading . . . All of a sudden he swerves around, facing our group . . . He has a terrified, surprised look of agony on his face . . . His hands clutch the air one moment, then they wrap themselves about his stomach . . . His teeth gnash . . . Biting the air, he staggers back and falls, close to my group . . .

Young runs over to help him, but McFadden is dead.

A man comes tearing across the field in front of us, headed straight for our group. He is without helmet or rifle. His hair sticks up and there is a wild look in his eyes. He passes through our lines waving his arms and shouting, 'Come on! . . . Come on!' He is insane.

The tank ahead turns slightly to the right. We turn also. The wheat here has been cut and we advance across the stubble. The machine-gun bullets are beat-

ing the ground at my feet. Unconsciously I raise my feet and step forward as though stepping over something.

We approach a road lined with trees. Some one in my group cries, 'Look!' I turn. He is pointing up at a tree on the road. The figure of a man shows through the leaves. The men drop to their knees and fire. A German machine-gunner and his gun crash to the ground. No orders to fire had been given.

Across the road a tank stood motionless. The front of it had been damaged. Through an opening on the side we could see the charred remains of the operator. The whole inner portion of the tank had been lined with shells. A direct hit had penetrated the tank and caused all these shells to explode. It was a fiery oven with no chance to escape. It was still smoking as we passed by.

Three of our officers were down on the right behind some tanks when several shells crashed in the midst of them and messed them up pretty badly.

Word came from the right to swing back in the original direction. This meant we had to cross back over the road with the trees again and out into the open stubble-field. I was on the left flank now. This meant that I had to go far enough out in the field to permit the other groups to get in.

I started across on a run, and as soon as I figured there was enough room for all, I faced to the east. The men crowded up, and first it was, 'Give way on the left,' then, 'Close over on the right.'

The machine guns were soon trained on us again and

the men dropped fast. Two hundred yards ahead was an embankment that meant certain protection.

Spud Murphy was over on my right, about ten men between us. I saw Spud stop, turn, and crumple down. He had been ripped open with machine-gun bullets. He died instantly.

One hundred yards from the embankment we broke into one wild dash. It was a sunken road with a high bank on its eastern side. We hit the bank and fell. We lay down a while and then started to climb the bank.

An officer came up — the adjutant from Battalion Headquarters. He said, 'Where are you men headed for?'

I looked along the bank for one of our officers, but there were none in sight. Not one had reached the sunken road. In fact I discovered that we had only fifteen men left of our platoon.

I said, 'None of our officers are here and I don't know just where our objective is, but they are still fighting up ahead.'

'What company are you out of?'

'Ninety-Seventh Company.'

Adjutant: 'Then this is your objective right here. The town of Tigny lies just ahead. Men from your company are in front of it, but the town is not to be occupied. Dig in here. You will have to keep a lookout on your right, as that flank is open.'

We dug in without losing any time. After we were all set, Eberle and I crawled over the bank and made

our way toward the town of Tigny, which lay a little to our right front. We found remnants of the Second, Third, and Fourth Platoons. They were all dug in, so we crawled back to our own holes.

Our man watching the right flank reported that men were crawling up from the rear over on our right beyond the road with the trees on it. We watched down our road. We saw men crawl out of the field and work their way across the road on their bellies. They were black men and wore blue uniforms. They were the French colonial troops from Morocco. Each man carried a crooked knife in one hand and drew a rifle along with the other. They looked down the road toward us and then paused. Then they crawled on into the field ahead of them toward the town of Tigny. The grass in the field would move, and then a form would slide by an open space. They were old-time fighters and never took prisoners.

Several fellows came down the road from the left carrying a Hotchkiss machine gun. They stopped and asked where the end of our line was on the right. I pointed down about thirty feet to the last man. They said they were going to set up the machine gun to protect the right flank.

A man came dragging himself down the road. He was lying on his left side and was pulling himself forward with his elbow. His right arm rested down along his right side. The sleeve was ragged and bloody. We recognized him and hollered down, 'Need any help, Brownie?'

He was Brownie Reeves from the Second Platoon.

He answered: 'No, I can make it all right. It's only an arm. Got any water?'

There wasn't a drop in the bunch. The first-aid station was about a hundred feet down the road to our left and so he dragged himself along.

Sergeant Rockwell was in the hole next to me. He had joined our outfit back on the Marne River. He had been on recruiting duty in Chicago. I leaned over and asked him how he would like to be back on State Street with a white belt on and a pretty blue uniform.

He looked at me a moment and said: 'I didn't know when I was well off. I did everything even to getting busted so I would be sent back to Quantico and get a chance to go across. I'll know better next time.'

As we were talking, two planes shot out of the sky and circled over our positions. One was chasing the other. One had a black cross underneath and the other a circle with a design in it. They flew fast and furious; now one was up, the other down. Around and around they went like cars on a roller-coaster. They were both shooting and in certain positions their bullets would go *plunk! — plunk!* in the road and in the bank. Then we would crouch down in our holes wishing they would go somewhere else and do their fighting. Finally one of the planes headed straight for the ground and hit straight on, nose first, with a crash. It burst into flames. We caught a glimpse of a black cross just as it hit the ground. We watched the flames consume it and for a long time afterwards a thin column of gray smoke arose from it. Nobody left the plane.

The German artillery was still banging away. At

three in the afternoon our artillery opened up and rained shells into the woods to the east. They kept up a steady bombardment and it piped the Germans down.

At five in the afternoon a runner came up from the first-aid station for a detail of four men to carry back a wounded man to Vierzy, so we had to let four of our men go. We asked them to bring us back some water if they could. I carried an extra canteen and I gave it to them.

One of the fellows came back, and he told us about his trip.

He said, 'Who do you suppose the wounded man was that we carried back to Vierzy?'

We said, 'Who?'

'Major Wise . . . After we set him down in the place they're using for a hospital, he thanked us and said, "Boys, they call me Johnny-the-Hard . . . But I'm hard no more."'

CHAPTER XXIII

We were told that the French would relieve us shortly after dark, but midnight came and no relief. Two A.M. came and there was a bustling down the road from the left. The French had arrived.

We left immediately and started out for Vierzy. While we were passing the first-aid station, we were stopped and asked if we would carry in one of the wounded men that was lying there. We couldn't refuse. There were no stretchers, so we laid our rifles on the ground and fastened a blanket around them. It took two rifles. The bayonets were left on and enclosed in their scabbards. The man was laid on the blankets face down and we hoisted him up to our shoulders. It took four of us to carry him on this kind of stretcher.

So we headed for Vierzy — Rockwell, Eberle, another fellow, and I. He was a heavy man we were carrying, and we were not all of the same height. The bayonet end, although covered, would cut into our shoulders and we would have to change positions every now and then. The wounded man would groan a little, especially when the rifles came together. This would cause the blanket to sag down and squeeze the wounded man. Also the rifles would sort of bang against him. It was tough going, and we did the best we could to keep the rifles apart and the blanket taut.

The road was rough. We were hungry, thirsty, and

tired, and growling. First one, then another, would express his opinion:

'Hell of a note if they can't at least furnish stretcher-bearers to carry in the wounded . . .'

'Back of the lines there's a bunch of gold-brickers that run around with a stretcher and look wise . . . Just as soon as a little trouble starts you can't find them . . .'

'I haven't had any sleep since we left the Marne . . . My legs are about ready to cave in . . .'

'Jesus! this rifle is cutting into my shoulder . . .'

'It wouldn't be so bad if we had a regular stretcher . . .'

'Let's set it down a minute and switch positions . . .'

We found a level spot and started to lay the wounded man down. As he was about to come in contact with the ground, the wounded man spoke up, 'Take it easy, will you, fellows?' And at the same time he sort of pushed his elbows forward so that they hit the ground first and then he gradually lowered himself down. Then he said, 'Sorry to put you fellows to all this trouble.'

'We're not blaming you. You didn't get shot up on purpose . . . We've been up all night and fighting all day . . . besides, this road is rougher than hell . . .'

We hoisted him up and started off again. This extra handling did not help the wounded man any.

'Let's keep in step and maybe it won't be so damned hard on our shoulders.'

'Keep out in the middle of the road more . . . I damn near fell into the ditch . . .'

'How the hell far do we have to carry this . . .'

'Back to that town, Vierzy, that we came through yesterday morning.'

'I'll never be able to make it carrying this load . . . I'm all in right now . . .'

Farther down the road we stopped again. We heard a car coming and in a few minutes a small Ford ambulance came in sight. It stopped when it saw us and we all thought, here's our chance to get rid of the wounded man. We put him down alongside the road and I went over. There were two men on the seat.

I said: 'There's a wounded man here and he's in very bad shape. Will you take him back to the hospital with you?'

'Can't do it. We've got orders to report to Captain Moore at Tigny and pick up a raft of wounded.'

'Take him along anyway . . . Christ! we're all in and can't carry him any farther . . .'

'Can't do it. We'll have more than we can handle as it is. Besides, we're likely to get blown up the way they are shelling this road . . .'

'Give us a regular stretcher, anyway. This guy is in bad shape and these rifles are raising hell with him . . .'

'Can't do it. We haven't got any extra stretchers . . .'

I noticed a couple of stretchers fastened to the car, and I whispered to Eberle, 'Keep talking to him until I get a stretcher off the side . . .'

So Eberle said to the driver, 'How far back is it to Vierzy?'

'It's only about a mile . . . Go down to the next road you meet and turn to the right . . . There's a graveyard at the corner . . . When you get into town, anybody can

show you where the wounded are being taken care of — it's a hell of a place . . .'

Then I whispered to Eberle, 'Let him go . . . We've got the stretcher . . .'

Eberle said, 'Well, I hope you get through all right,' and they drove off.

We opened up the stretcher alongside the wounded man and I said, 'Say, can you roll over on your back until we switch you over to this stretcher? It won't be so hard riding . . .'

'Jesus! His guts are sticking out . . .'

Wounded man: 'I can't get up, fellows. The bandage is stuck to the blanket and every time I move it pulls me apart . . .'

He had been shot in the belly and the bandage had slipped down.

'The only thing we can do is to move both him and the blanket.'

We unfastened the blanket from the rifles and lifted him over, blanket and all. He never made a murmur. He put his arms forward a little so they would reach the stretcher first and then lowered himself down. Then he said, 'Just a minute, fellows,' and he pushed down on his mid-section. 'All right.'

We lifted him up. He did not seem so heavy now.

'Any of you guys want to take along these rifles?'

'Aw, to hell with the rifles! We're relieved as soon as we get rid of this guy. We sure rate a rest . . .'

Day was breaking, so we had to hurry.

'There's the graveyard up ahead . . .'

'Christ! look at the hill we've got to climb . . .'

'We'll be damned lucky if we don't get shot to hell before we get there, the way the shells are falling . . .'

The dead were still lying along the road.

'It's about time they were breaking out a burial detail . . . Some of those guys are ready to bust . . .'

'I'd give a hundred francs for a good drink of water . . .'

We finally climbed the hill into the town. A high stone wall ran along the east side. An M.P. hollered at us, 'You'd better keep close to the wall . . . The road is under shell fire . . .'

We asked where they were taking the wounded and a church was pointed out to us. In front of the church was a stream of water coming out of a pipe or fountain. Two hundred men, at least, were trying to get at it. We were going to make an attempt to buck the line with the wounded man, making the claim that he wanted a drink, but it looked too hopeless, so we went on into the church.

We asked a fellow standing inside where we should put him. He said, 'Put him there any place.'

We didn't, though. We saw a doctor bandaging up another fellow, so we asked him, saying that it was a bad case. He said, 'Set him down here and I'll see what I can do for him.'

We set the wounded man down carefully. He didn't make any move with his arms. I bent over to hear if he was breathing. There was a creepy feeling in the back of my neck. I touched him on the shoulder and he slowly turned his head toward me.

I said, 'Do you want a drink or anything?'

He said, 'No, thanks,' very softly.

While in this advanced hospital I learned that Major Vare, our original captain, had been severely wounded while crossing the wheat-field the morning before.

As soon as Eberle and I got outside, we started a hunt for water. There was no chance of getting near the place out in front. Over at the other side of town we located an old well in a yard. It was a chain well with a series of little buckets on it. We worked the handle around and around and finally a little trickle of water came. It looked muddy, so we kept turning. It cleared up a little, and I tasted it. It was wet, so I got the cup out and let it fill and Eberle got his out and was filling his as I was drinking mine.

An officer came over to us. 'Don't you know better than to drink that water? That well is full of gas.'

I said, 'Well, I guess I'm dead then,' and finished the cup.

We inquired around until we found out that our company was to assemble back in the woods where we first came in, so we headed for there. We struck out across the valley to the west. The railroad ran above us on the left. We passed the tunnel where the French cavalry had made the charge in the face of the German gun. It was cleaned up. There were still broken lances, helmets, and gas masks lying around. Toward the woods was a long stretch of earth that had been freshly dug and covered up. On top was a crude wooden cross. One word was on it — *Chevaux*.

We stopped at the place where we had stored our rolls. They were scattered around, as part of the com-

ny had passed back. I found mine with Spud Murny's under the tree where we had left them. We opened Spud's, as we knew the salvage detail would be along soon and they would get anything of value. There was nothing in it but clothes.

Eberle picked up the new overseas cap. 'Here's the cap Spud was going to christen in Paris . . . I guess I'll keep it to remember him by . . .'

With our rolls under our arms we headed for the Villers-Cotterets Wood. Judging by the number of rolls still there, we figured we were among the first ones back.

We located the galley and I shook hands with Nagel. We had hot coffee, a dish of beans, bread, jam, and we felt like new men.

I said to Nagel. 'Well, the rest of the fellows ought to be in pretty soon . . .'

Nagel's face took a peculiar twist and he said, 'I guess they're all in that's coming.' He pointed to a group here and a group there.

'How many?' I said.

'Seventy-two out of the two hundred and fifty men.'

'How many of the original company?'

'Twenty.'

We had been gone only one day. I thought of the pile of rolls back on the hill.

CHAPTER XXIV

DURING the first night back in the Villers-Cotterets Wood something happened that for a moment threatened to wipe out the remaining members of the company.

The early part of the night was very quiet. There were plenty of ready-made holes, so I picked one out and turned in early for some sleep. Coming on toward midnight we were awakened by terrible explosions and crashing of falling trees.

We were in total darkness. Men had been hit by the falling trees and were crying for help. The guns or gun that was doing the firing seemed close at hand. The shells were coming straight into the woods from the east. Ordinarily shells would drop in, but these were driving right through the trees, breaking them down. The fire lasted about ten minutes. We were busy the rest of the night getting the men out from under the fallen trees.

We found out the next morning that a German motorized outfit had got through the lines near Soissons and had come down the main road leading into Villers-Cotterets and had fired upon us from the road and had then escaped back into their lines.

The next day we pulled out of the Villers-Cotterets Wood, and we sure went out faster than we came in and nobody cared whether we stopped for rest or not.

I was at the tail-end of our company going out. Fol-

lowing us was Captain Hall, with his company. Captain Hall was the man that swore me in at Chicago.

He said to me, 'Where is your rifle, Corporal?' (I still had corporal stripes, but was an acting sergeant.)

I said, 'We used it to make a stretcher to carry in a wounded man and I had to leave it at the advanced hospital.' (I had left it on the road where the ambulance stopped.) Sooner or later I would have to give an account of it.

He did not say any more.

We dropped back to a place called Nanteuil-le-Haudouin. There was a large delousing plant here, and the first thing we did after arrival was to line up. A bag was given to us. We put all our clothes into it, blankets and all. We took a hot bath while our clothes were being steamed. Our clothes were a nice wrinkled mess when we took them out of the bag.

It wasn't long before a bunch of replacements were brought up and that meant the same old drilling. I was assigned to the Fourth Platoon, which was short of non-coms. All our officers were new and they were out to inject some pep into us. They ran us raggedy — had us dig practice trenches and everything. We tried to tell them that that was not the way the war was fought. The officers were fresh from school and knew the rules of the game and they won out.

I put in a bid for the job of police sergeant and I was given the job with the understanding that the job ceased as soon as we entered the lines. (I would be with the Fourth Platoon when we went to battle again.) I wanted the police sergeant's job so that I shouldn't

have to go out and drill every day. I didn't like to drill behind the lines. It always interfered with my drinking.

I would send over for a detail of men to dig a latrine or some other job. The sergeant in charge of the platoon would say, 'Any of you men want to volunteer to go on this police detail?' The whole platoon would fall out.

Fellows would come to me and ask me to fix it up so they would be picked for the police detail. If they were old-timers I would.

Eberle and I were walking down the street and we saw an officer coming toward us on the other side.

I said, 'It looks like McElroy.'

And so it was. We saluted and he came across the street and shook hands and said he was glad to see us again. We hadn't seen him since before he was wounded in Belleau Wood.

I noticed he had on captain bars and I congratulated him. He asked me what platoon I was with. I proudly answered that I was the police sergeant.

He said, 'What!' and I repeated.

He was mad. He said, 'I'll see that you are assigned to a regular platoon at once.'

He thought the job had been forced on me. I hurried to tell him that I had asked for the job and wanted to keep it. He looked at me and sort of smiled and walked away. I kept the job.

CHAPTER XXV

We left Nanteuil-le-Haudouin and moved via box-cars to the region of Nancy in the Toul Sector. It was a long ride, but the men didn't mind it. They didn't have to drill.

We landed in Nancy, but the town was too big for us, so we hiked out. About August 1, 1918, we reached Liverdun, which lies between Toul and Nancy, but to the north. This was to be our home for some time.

There was a big ammunition plant at Liverdun, and the Germans knew it. Every night they would fly over and drop a few tons of bombs. There were small cafés perched away up on the sides of the hills, really mountains. Streets led up to the front doors and in the rear were rooms that were built out over the precipice. Here we would sit and drink beer and wine. Soon we would hear the hum of the airplanes. From the neighboring hills would flash forth powerful beams from search-lights that searched the sky for planes. There would be fifty or more of these lights shooting up at various angles. The anti-aircraft guns would put on an air barrage and you could see their shells bursting in the light beams.

Once in a while one of the lights would locate a plane. Immediately more lights would concentrate at that spot and the plane would seem to hang in air like a great white spider. Then you could hear the motor roar — up and down the plane would go, trying to escape from the lights. The shells would be bursting all

around. Only once did I see them actually bring down a plane. He was caught in this mesh of lights. Suddenly he seemed to turn on his side with his tail up and disappeared in the darkness. A jet of fire shot into the sky, and we watched it race to the ground leaving a trail behind it like a comet. It disappeared in the valley without a sound.

Every evening there was a procession of civilians filing through the streets of Liverdun carrying mattresses and bed-clothing. They were headed in the direction of the signs — 'To the *abris*' (mines). These were deep coal mines. The people slept in them at night to escape the nightly air raids. Once in a while some of the civilians would take a chance and not go down into the *abris*. Along in the night would come the hum of the airplanes. They would let fall their calling-cards. They were big ones, and the air would seem to crack and the whole town would tremble when they hit. There would be wild excitement in the streets then. Men, women, and children who stayed behind would go dashing madly down the streets for the *abris*. The guards would have to be on the lookout, because many of the excited men and women would rush out of the houses carrying lighted lamps.

I was standing in the street one night when the airplanes were humming overhead and an excited Frenchman came along. He clutched me by the arm and pointed to the sky. Then he beat a tattoo on my shoulder and again pointed up saying, '*La-la-la Boche!*' And away he went, headed for the *abris*.

Notice came up one evening that our General, Le-

jeune, would be in Liverdun later on in the evening and was bringing with him a very celebrated young lady entertainer from the States. A platform was erected across from the ammunition factory in a sort of natural amphitheater. We all brushed up and turned out for the event.

The General's car drove up and unloaded its passengers. They walked up the steps to the platform. It was growing dusk. Lejeune gave us a brief talk and then brought forth the young lady and introduced us to Elsie Janis. We stood and howled and yelled and clapped our hands.

It did not take her long to swing into action with a few jokes that we all understood. She could speak our language, but asked us not to tell the Y.M.C.A. on her, as she was camouflaged under their banner.

She sang songs and danced. It was growing dark and we wanted to see her, so we hollered for lights. No lights were allowed in this area, as it was close to the front, but the General finally came to the rescue. His car was standing there and he had it shifted so it headed toward the stage and then the spot-light was turned on and Elsie performed in front of it.

Some of us were sitting on a bank at the side of the stage. Elsie had on her high-kicking pleated dress, and she sure could kick and spin on one leg. During a pause in her performance, she turned to us on the side lines with a laugh, and said, 'You fellows are having a special show.' And we were. The spot-light hit her just right and produced a real silhouette effect. That kicking dress was made of very thin material!

The crowd yelled for more and more, and she sang and mimicked and danced. When we finally let her finish, Lejeune asked us if we wanted her for the Marine Corps, and the answer came back, 'We'll tell the world we do!' We sang a couple of verses of the Marine Hymn for her, and then the party ended. The light went out and the General's car moved on toward Nancy. It was our first real entertainment.

That night the German planes were over in full force as usual, and as their exploding bombs shook our billet, somebody said, 'I hope Elsie got back safe.'

CHAPTER XXVI

We made two trips to the front lines at Pont-à-Mousson. The trenches ran right through the main streets of the town. Some of the civilians still occupied the houses, although most of them were in ruins. It was first understood that we would take over the front lines, but we didn't.

We moved back to Chavigny, a town south of Nancy. A new town meant extra police work. The first job we had was finding a location for the rolling kitchen. The only available place was a building that had been used as a winery. A big press was in it for pressing grapes. Alongside the press stood a big wooden vat. It was full with a thick crust on it. There was quite a smell about the place. I examined the vat and thrust a stick through the crust on top. Pugh! The smell nearly raised the roof. We had to get rid of it, but we could not move the vat. It contained the dregs and the pulp of grapes. It must have been standing there for years.

I got some buckets and we dipped the stuff out, bucket by bucket. The men wore their gas masks. A hole was dug in back and we dumped the stuff into it. Then we smashed up the vat and threw that in too. The hole was then covered up. The galley moved in.

One job the fellows liked was to sit over in the woods and make brooms. We would cut branches and trim them down, then get a good-sized sapling and make

a handle and tie the branches to one end. We used these brooms to sweep the streets.

The bunch was sweeping the company street one morning. I noticed a woman come out of a house and rush at the fellow who had a pitchfork. She grabbed the fork out of his hand and scraped down the manure pile next to her, picked up what she had scraped down, and threw it up on the pile next her door. Then she threw the fork at his feet and shook her fist in his face, jabbering away all the time.

I got there as fast as I could and asked the fellow what was the matter. She turned on me and told me what she thought of me too. Luckily my knowledge of French was simply of the bedroom type and had to be slowly explained. She went back to her house, went inside, and slammed the door.

So I asked the fellow again. He was picking up the fork. He said: 'I was cleaning up this side of the street, and when I came to these two piles of manure I noticed they were kind of messy around the bottom. I went into this other house and borrowed a fork of the woman. I then scraped up around the piles and threw the scrapings up on this other woman's pile, where I got the fork. The other woman came out then and nearly threw a fit!'

I said, 'The next time you had better go fifty-fifty on the scrapings.'

The curtain on the door of the house where he got the fork moved a little, but no one came out. He brought back the fork and thanked the woman for the use of it.

The German airplanes flew over this section, but seldom dropped any bombs. The anti-aircraft guns in the surrounding hills would open up at them. The people would clear off the streets while the barrage was in progress and small pieces of shrapnel from the exploding shells would rain down into the streets. After things were quieted down, the kids would come rushing out and go hunting for the pieces of broken metal.

Our regimental gas officer established temporary quarters in our village and non-coms from the various outfits were sent to him for instruction. I was sent from our company and was taught the inner mysteries of the gas masks, how they were constructed, how to detect defects, and what to do to remedy them. I was then appointed Company Gas Non-Com Officer.

Shortly afterwards McElroy called me and told me that I was to go to a grenade and bomber school. Sergeant Thompson and I packed up and left that same day. We arrived at Regimental Headquarters and found quite a bunch of non-coms and officers from the other companies gathered there. We had to move in open army trucks to the station, and the officers were hesitating about climbing into the trucks. I guess they expected touring cars or something. Then an officer came along the sidewalk and he let loose on the bunch of officers and told them to hurry up and get aboard — that they would have to learn to take care of themselves.

I asked a fellow standing near me who the officer was that was raising all the hell.

He said, 'That's Colonel Wise — they call him Johnny-the-Hard.'

I said, 'Wasn't he wounded at Soissons?'

'Yes, but you can't kill some people.'

The grenade school was located at Fort Plesnoy, near the city of Langres. We dissected grenades, made home-made bombs or *pétards*. We learned the secrets of detonators, and exploded caps in our hands while counting. We had instructions on the use of every kind of grenade, including the German potato-mashers. It was a very interesting school and well conducted.

Like all French forts, Fort Plesnoy had a deep moat around it. There were small towns around, and they had cafés to which we would travel now and then. After one session in the cafés, a bunch of us decided to capture the fort. We went up as a line of skirmishers and two men fell into the moat, which was at least twenty feet deep and twenty-five feet across. They tried to make it in two jumps, but failed. One broke a leg and the other broke several ribs. They were the only casualties.

Fort Plesnoy is a typical French fortress of a comparatively recent build, in that it is built of reënforced concrete. It was on the top of a commanding hill overlooking the country in the vicinity of Langres. There is a whole series of these forts surrounding Langres, forming an outer belt of resistance. Fort Plesnoy is about fifteen kilometers east of Langres. The fort is built well into the hill. Over the top of it is a thick layer of earth, which is grown to grass, trees, and

shrubbery. You could walk over the top of it and never know a fort existed beneath your feet, except that you must beware of the moat.

During our stay at Fort Plesnoy, mimic battles were put on. We would move upon the imaginary enemy under a heavy barrage furnished by machine guns. Stokes mortars and one-pounders, sometimes even a few French 75s, would join in. But there was always something missing in these attacks. Everything was going away from you and nothing coming your way. It was an ideal way to battle. Nobody got killed. We had a feeling of security; we were not playing for keeps. We had our made-to-order wounded men, and when we called out, 'Stretcher-bearers on the right or left,' the stretcher-bearers would come trotting across the field, put their stretcher down, open it up, get their man onto it, and be off again, all done by the count. It was all part of the game.

Staff officers from the college at Langres would address us now and then on the Art of Strategy and Tactics — strategy as referred to the general movements of troops to the battle-zone and tactics in relation to troops actually engaged under fire.

One day the staff officer, in giving us an illustration of what he was talking about, quoted the battles around Belleau Wood and Bouresches as examples of what not to do — as bad examples of modern warfare.

'The attack of June 6 was made without any artillery preparation,' he said.

A Marine hollered, 'There wasn't any artillery there!'

Cries of 'Sit down!' were heard.

The officer rapped for order, saying, 'This is not an open forum.'

The staff officer continued: 'The question we are concerned with is how to conduct a battle properly, and a battle is more than half won if there has been the right preparation made in advance. The old system of infantry charges will not work in this war. . . . Man against machine and man loses. It is necessary to work machine against machine. I am not finding fault in any way with the men and officers who participated in the Belleau Wood battle. There are many able, far-seeing officers who hold the opinion that this was a real turning-point in the war. It may not be approved by scientific military experts, but the far-reaching effects it had on the morale of the soldiers and civilians may be of greater value than the greatest piece of strictly military strategy. . . .

'It is a recognized fact that the battle-lines extend a long way back — back to your very homes across the sea. . . . The home exerts a strong influence upon the front lines, and what comes from the front is moulding the opinions back home. . . . We are out to win the war, and if influences outside of regular military practice can help us, by all means let them. . . . The newspaper is the natural medium between the front and your homes, and it is having a decided influence on the outcome of the war. . . .'

When the class was over, we filed out. Cries were heard from various places . . .

'Where were the Marines at Château-Thierry?'

Answer: 'In the newspapers!'

Then the Marines would yell back: 'America's selected men! Yah, you got patriotic as hell after they tied a rope around your neck and dragged you in!'

Back they would come with 'Draft dodgers! Draft dodgers!'

Then we would all line up together and eat.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE school lasted a month, and then we started back to our outfits. We liquored up good while waiting for the train to make up at Andilly-en-Bassigny. A bunch of us were out turning handsprings and summersaults alongside the station. The officers were with us. One officer was good. He could make the standing back and front springs without touching with his hands. We all had to have another drink on that.

The French *chef de gare* finally told us the train was ready, so we walked down the track and found two cars hooked to an engine. This was our train — one car for the officers and one for the men, but we decided that one car was not enough for us. Farther down the track was a string of coaches. We got out and went down to the coaches, and when the railroad men were not looking, we pushed a coach down and coupled it on in back of ours. So we had two coaches all the way.

Our destination was Toul, and it was dark when we drew into the Toul terminal. An officer came through to where we were and, addressing me, said, 'Sergeant, I want you to pick out a detail of men to handle the officers' baggage from the car ahead up to the station waiting-room.'

I said, 'Yes, sir.' But my thoughts ran different.

The train slowed down. All the fellows had their packs on. We jumped off, crossed over to another track, and beat it for the station. The poor officers had

to carry their own baggage for a change. Thompson and I slept in the Toul Station for the rest of the night.

The next morning we were hungry and rather thirsty, so we looked around and finally saw a sort of summer garden over across the tracks. We went down and across. A gate was standing open, so we went in. There were pagoda-like buildings with tables and benches at various places, and we picked one out, took off our packs, and made ourselves at home. Nobody came near us.

We saw a French soldier crossing the garden toward the gate. We hollered, 'Monsieur!'

He looked, and we waved for him to come over, which he did. We were not clear on certain French expressions. We knew how to ask for a drink, but were not sure of how to say, 'Where can you get a drink around here?'

So I said, 'Monsieur, avey vou the vin rouge?'

'No, no, Monsieur.'

I said to Thompson, 'Wave some francs at him.'

So Thompson pulled out some money, saying, 'Bokoo francs pour la vin rouge?'

The Frenchman paused, then said in English, 'Come, I will show you.'

He led the way back among the trees and shrubs to a stone house. He knocked at the door and a woman came out. He told her something in French, and she nodded her head and stepped aside for us to come in. I slipped the Frenchman a franc and he *merci*ed us and went away.

We set our packs down and asked the woman, 'Avey vou the vin rouge?'

She said, 'Oui,' and let us into another room with a couple of tables and some chairs in it. We sat down. She brought out a liter of wine apiece and a couple of glasses.

I said, 'Combien?'

She said, 'Sank franc,' pointing to each bottle. So we paid her five francs apiece.

Thompson said, 'Maybe she has some eggs that we can get her to fry up.' So he called to her, 'Madam, avey vou dees erfs?'

'Oui, Monsieur.'

Thompson said to me, 'How do you say, "Cook me up some"?'

I could not remember, but I thought I could make her understand, so I said, 'Donney mwah dees erfs, Madam,' at the same time I made motions of eating them, adding, 'bokoo faim.'

She looked at me kind of surprised and said, 'Dees erfs pour vous?'

'Oui, Madam,' I answered.

She nodded.

Thompson said, 'Dees erfs pur mwah osee, Madam.'

Again she looked surprised and said, 'Dees erfs pour vou?'

Thompson said, 'Oui.'

She went away and we could hear her rattling away at the stove. I said, 'I wonder has she any potatoes? I'll ask her, anyway.' So I called out, 'Madam, avey vou de pom de terr?'

She answered from the other room, 'Oui, monsieur.'

I asked Thompson if he wanted some, and he said sure. So I said, 'Madam, donney mwah pom de terr avec mwah erfs.'

And Thompson said, 'Osee mwah, Madam.'

She said, 'Omelette?'

We both said, 'Oui.'

This meant she would cook the eggs and potatoes together. We drank up the wine and waited.

Thompson said, 'Do you remember how we used to call Spud Murphy, Pom de terr Murphy?'

I did.

Soon the woman came in with two big plates of scrambled eggs and potatoes, and the plate was what you call full! I looked at Thompson and he looked at me.

I said, 'How the hell many eggs do you think she has there?'

Thompson said, 'I don't know, but I can eat all of mine.'

We ordered some more wine and went after the potatoes and eggs. When we got through, we had plenty. The woman was standing watching us with a faint smile on her face.

I said, pointing to the plate, which was now empty, 'Combien erfs, Madam?'

She said, 'Dees,' holding up her ten fingers.

'Hear that, Thompson? You had ten eggs.'

'Why didn't she make it an even dozen?'

'I wonder why she gave us ten eggs apiece.'

'How many did you ask for?'

'I didn't ask for any number — I simply asked for some eggs — dees erfs. Say, how do you say ten in French?'

'Dees.'

'Dees! I thought "dees" meant "some." Well, say, that's what we asked for and we sure got them.'

'Wait until you hear what the damage is.'

We got up and the woman was waiting to collect.

'Combien francs, Madam?'

She held up both hands and then one hand, fifteen francs.

'That's not so bad.'

We shouldered our packs and went on our way back through the gate down across the tracks. The main part of town lay off to our left. The only entrance was through a large gate. We decided to go uptown, so we hit for the gate. Two M.P.'s were standing there, and as we started in they stopped us.

'Show your pass.'

'We haven't any pass.'

'Then you can't pass this gate.'

We weren't so crazy about going in to see the town, anyway.

'Let's see if we can find out down at the depot where the Second Division is. There must be somebody around here who knows.'

There was an officer sitting in the *chef de gare's* office.

'Lieutenant, could you tell us where the Second Division is?'

'The Second Division is up north of here some place, but I don't know the exact location.'

'How should we get up there?'

'There's a dinky road runs up that way. The station is just west of here. The best thing you can do is to try and get aboard some train that is pulling out. They all go the same way. It's a single track. But you may have a hard time getting a ride, as the line is very busy just now.'

'Thank you, Lieutenant.'

We found the station and there was quite a mob around it — soldiers from all outfits. A train was being made up, and along in the afternoon the gates were opened and we all flocked in. No questions were asked where you were going or what outfit you belonged to. The train was going north and that was where the front was. As long as you were headed toward the front, no questions were ever asked.

Thompson and I got into an empty gondola car along with a bunch of other fellows. None of us had any idea where we were headed for. The train pulled out around 5 P.M. As soon as it grew dark, we crawled into a corner and tried to get some sleep.

Early the next morning we were awakened by the sound of heavy firing. The train had stopped. It was the morning of the big drive on Saint-Mihiel — September 12. It was the first All-American, million-dollar barrage, and they were giving full value. The car we were in rocked from the vibration. As the daylight increased, the barrage slackened and we knew the troops were advancing. We had heard rumors a month back that this drive was being planned.

We got out of the car and went up to the head end to

see if we could find out when the train was going forward. All we could find out was — finish. It was evident that they did not intend to go any farther. We started hiking down the tracks headed north. After a while a road crossed the tracks, and headed off in a northeasterly direction. We took it, as it was hard traveling along the track. Besides, the French towns were seldom located on the railroad and we were looking for a town.

That afternoon we reached Manonville, which was twenty-two kilometers north of Toul. We were able to buy some cheese, *haricots* (beans), and wine. We had some hardtack with us, so we made out a meal. We then cut back for the railroad tracks, which were to the west of the town, but there was no train reported.

We slept in an empty shed in Manonville that night.

The next day we ran into men from the Second Division. They were headed for the south. They said the Sixth Marines were close behind somewhere. We went on, and by and by we saw a man and a horse coming toward us. As he drew nearer, I said, 'That looks like Hooper.'

And it was. 'Hello, Mr. Hooper — when did you join the cavalry?'

He said, 'Oh, they donated this horse to me, so I could get around quicker.'

'Did you see anything of the Third Battalion on your travels?'

'Yes, they are back along this road about a kilometer. The Ninety-Seventh Company is on the right

side of the road. You will see the rolling kitchen as you go by.'

'Seen anything of Big Stewart lately?'

'The last time I heard from him he was at some camouflage school at Gondrecourt.'

We went on our way.

'Hooper was a good scout . . . wonder when he got his commission.'

'Remember that whole bunch that came down together from Chicago to Parris Island — Hooper, Stewart, Young, Manning, Carstairs, and Conroy? Didn't they all work at Marshall Field's?'

'I don't think they all worked at Field's — Big Stewart and Young did, but the rest I'm not sure of.'

We had all been in the Forty-Third Drill Company at Parris Island, South Carolina. The drill sergeant, Mann, used to run our heads off. We had all kinds of plots formed against him.

In a short time we found the rolling kitchen, shook hands with a lot of the fellows, and reported in to the company commander, Captain McElroy.

We heard that our outfit had attacked the morning of September 12 at Saint-Mihiel and that they had reached their objective, Thiaucourt, before noon. They were released that same day or night and started back. We lost no men in that attack, but had a few casualties caused by our own shells.

The troops were resting in the daytime and marching at night. We hiked all the way back to the town of

Choloy, which is five kilometers west of Toul — and from Choloy we went to Vitry-le-François via train.

The next morning in Vitry-le-François we were looking for a place to wash, and four of us located a French wash-house with a stream of running water down the middle of it.

We stripped off and were splashing around when in came five French women with their baskets of clothes. They stopped short when they saw us. They looked at each other and started jabbering, then laughed, humped their shoulders, and put down their baskets of clothes. Then they got down on their knees along the cement slab that extended down into the water and pretty soon they were pounding away on their clothes with paddles.

We stood in the water for a while like a bunch of September Morns, wondering what to do. The women didn't pay any more attention to us, so at last we dashed out, piled into our clothes, and were on our way.

CHAPTER XXVIII

From Vitry-le-François we went via camion through Châlons-sur-Marne to Suippes. We unloaded just south of Suippes, formed a column of twos and marched north. Standing at the entrance of Suippes were two French soldiers on guard. They made no move and spoke no word.

Suippes was a city of the past, and now in the dark, the ruined buildings loomed up like so many tombstones in a graveyard. Among the ruins French soldiers with their pale blue uniforms were moving about like so many ghosts.

We moved on in silence. The only sound was the ringing of our hobnails on the stone pavements. Orders had been passed, 'No lights . . . Gas masks in the alert position.'

Out of the town we marched. It was like coming out of a long-closed tomb. Along a broad road we traveled for a short distance, then swung off to the left across an open field and over to a wide ditch-like trench lined on both sides with trees. We were ordered to get into this trench.

Lieutenant Deming, a new officer, spoke to us in a low voice, telling us not to remove packs and to be ready to move out at a moment's notice.

We passed the rest of the night huddled up together and talking in hushed whispers. When morning came, I looked out over the trench. It looked like 'No-Man's

Land,' all right. Nothing but shell holes and old broken rusty barbed wire.

Across the way, in a dugout, I saw a French soldier. I crept out of the trench and crawled along the ground over to him and slipped down in the dugout. He was boiling coffee.

I asked him in a low voice, 'How far from us are the Germans?'

He said in a natural voice, 'Six kilometers.'

'But,' I said, 'this is the front line, isn't it?'

He laughed and said, 'No — six kilometers,' and pointed up north.

He poured out two tin cups of coffee and gave me one. After drinking it, I crawled back to the trench again and got in. The men were still sitting in silence.

I said to Reed and Larson in a low voice, 'Do you know how close the Germans are?'

'No,' they whispered.

I whispered back, 'Six kilometers.'

Reed said, 'Six kilometers!' Then in a loud voice, 'Then what the hell are we sitting here like a bunch of dummies for?'

CHAPTER XXIX

NIGHT . . . and we are moving up toward the front in single file. We pass through the ruined towns of Souina and Somme-Py. Our line is traveling along the right side of the road . . . The artillery is moving with us. They have the middle of the road. The French are on the left of the road . . . but they are moving the other way.

The artillery halts, but we go on. At a crossroad our line is halted by a French outfit that is moving to our right across from us.

On the same road with us is a line of French wine carts, each drawn by one horse. (The French soldiers always had their wine ration.) Shells began dropping around us. The French soldiers that were leading the horses ducked over to the bank. One of our men sneaked across and captured a French wine cart and horse. Our line moved up, and so did the wine and horse. At the next stop, the wine was run off into canteens and the horse turned around and started off. Away he went back to join the French.

We swung out across the open country and crossed a large basin-like area that had been scooped out. Boards had been laid out to form a road. The ground was white, and in the moonlight it looked like snow. It was chalk. We were crossing the chalk fields of the Champagne Sector. This sector was called the 'Race-track of the War' because the French and German armies had been chasing each other back and forth across these chalk fields for the last four years.

After some distance we halted, and word was passed back for the sergeants to report at the head of the column. I reported. Stores of ammunition were piled up and each sergeant was allotted so much for his platoon — one bandolier of rifle ammunition for each man — Chaut-Chaut ammunition and grenades.

While I was getting my stuff, I saw somebody I hadn't seen since were were at Parris Island — McGorley. He had been a sergeant in the Ninety-Seventh Company.

I said, 'Hello, Mac.'

And he said: 'Why, hello, Sergeant. . . . Where have you been all this time? I've looked for you time and again . . . I wanted to give you that thirty-five bucks I owe you . . .'

'See me when we come out of the line . . .'

It was midnight. The long column of men would move forward, halt, move forward, and halt again. From the nature of these jerky stops and goes, we could tell that the men ahead were going into positions. Our turn was next. The captain and runners are before us.

Captain McGrath was now in charge of the company on the line, and he said to Lieutenant Deming, 'Lieutenant, have your men take up positions on this slope of the hill. They can use the holes that are already dug.' Then he added, 'Wait, the sergeant here' — indicating me — 'can take care of it. You come along with me.'

And the lieutenant said to me: 'Have the men get located as quickly as possible. I will send you any orders that may come up.'

Then I said to the men, 'Pass the word back for all corporals to report at the head of the platoon . . .'

Four corporals and Sergeant Franks reported.

I said: 'We are taking up position here on our left. My hole is here' — pointing to one — 'the first squad will take the first eight holes, the second squad the next eight, and so on . . .'

Each man took the first hole he came to. The holes were not in an even line, but zigzagged. I went along with each corporal and saw each man holed. I had to have some idea where the men were.

I had a hard time finding my way back to my own hole in the dark. The hole was not very deep or wide, and I decided to trim it up a bit. It was raining, so I piled the dirt up along the high end and down both sides. This would keep the water from draining in on me. I also left a mound down the middle of the hole to lie on. This left small ditches at the bottom which would hold the water that seeped in or fell in directly. The ground was soft, and it did not take long to remodel the hole.

It looked like an early morning attack, so I decided to sleep with my full equipment. It is just as easy to sleep in this manner after you get used to it. The straps, the cartridge belt, gas mask, and combat pack all tend to keep you warm. I took the automatic from the holster on my right side and put it in the left pocket of my blouse. I slept on my right side, and it is not

comfortable to lie on a gun. Besides, it would get wet and muddy. The rifle with bayonet fixed was placed standing up near my head. I put my shovel back on my pack. When I lay down, I was all set to get up and go at a moment's notice.

The dirt at the bottom of the hole was soft, rather mushy, but as soon as I got snuggled down in it, it did not feel half bad. Mud is not bad to sleep in if you are not too fussy. It holds the heat pretty well, once you get it warmed up. I slept with my helmet on, using it for a pillow.

The area in back of us glowed like a red ember. The roar of guns was constant.

I lay for a few moments in my hole reviewing my present position. I said to myself: 'You are lying with your head to the enemy. . . . You are facing your own platoon. . . . (I knew I shouldn't turn over.) You have all your equipment on. . . . Your gas mask is part way out. . . . Put the mouthpiece in first and hold your nose in case of sudden gas attack. . . . Your rifle is before you at your head. . . . The artillery is behind you raising hell. . . . Do not make any sudden moves. . . .'

By understanding definitely my position before falling asleep and figuring what to do in case trouble arose, I felt secure. I knew when I woke up in the morning, I should have an idea of where I was.

To go down a line of men in the early morning and wake them up after a four-hour sleep gives one an idea of the workings of a confused mind. Some men get up sound asleep and go walking away. Others wake up with a start and draw back like snarling animals.

Others just open their eyes, say, 'All right,' and they are all right. They go to sleep prepared.

With this review of things passing through my mind, I fell asleep.

The first thought that came to me when I woke up was, Where am I? Gradually the thoughts of the night before came back. The roar of the artillery was still going on. Was it night or day? I kept my eyes closed, as the opening of them seemed to break the stream of thought.

In a few moments I had myself located. I opened my eyes. My rifle was right before me. It was breaking day. It had stopped raining. I had a watch in the small pocket of my breeches on my right side and I rolled over a little in order to get at it. My combat pack would not let me roll very far.

Just as I was about to draw out the watch, my eyes suddenly fastened on a hand sticking out of the mud from the side of my hole. My first impulse was to jump up and get out of that hole quick, but the thought, 'Do not make any sudden moves,' got possession of me before my muscles got in action. I lay still. I could not keep my eyes off that hand. I could not imagine how it got there. It was not there when I lay down. If it had been I should have felt it. I remembered leaning up against that bank. Still, there it was. It was fully exposed from the wrist. The hand was turned down, the fingers drawn, giving it almost the appearance of a claw. The hand had a peculiar mottled dirty color due to the chalky ground it had been lying in. It was not decayed.

Who did the hand belong to? — German, Frenchman, or American? Hardly the last, as we were the first Americans in this sector. Was it part of a buried man? He must be lying face down judging from the way the hand was turned. Perhaps it was a hand that had been cut off . . .

My own right hand was still at my watch pocket. That brought my attention back to the question of time. I took the watch out and saw that it was twenty minutes to five. Better get up, I thought, and find out if we are to make an attack this morning.

I squirmed around so I could get on my feet without bumping the hand. Standing in the hole I looked over our position. It was a barren pock-marked hill. No sign of life on it. The valley below was hidden in a blanket of fog. I crawled out of the hole and started up the hill to find the lieutenant's dugout. Part way up I saw a man moving toward me. It was Fred, our company's runner. I stopped and waited for him.

'What's the dope, Fred?'

'No attack this morning. The company will remain in the positions they now hold. They must keep under cover at all times.'

'Is there any chow in sight?'

'No. The galleys are back at Somme-Py and will not move up to-day.'

The no-attack news sounded good to me. It was like a reprieve. I went back to my hole and stood looking down at it. It was a good hole, and deep, but I did not like that dead hand sticking out of the side.

I looked around for another hole, but couldn't see

any vacant ones. I could dig another, but that was work and took time. A shell burst close by, and a piece of shrapnel went *zowie!* over my head and *plunk!* into the mud. I got down into the hole. Dead hands were forgotten. More shells fell, and I stayed down.

The shelling lasted half an hour. By that time I didn't like the hand any better, but I had worked out a plan to get rid of it. First I had to find out if it was a loose hand. I took hold of it and gave it a good pull. No movement. A dead man was at the other end of it. Then I took off my combat pack and removed the shovel and got busy pulling down dirt from the top and letting it fall down alongside the hand. I also filled up from the bottom. Luckily this mud was soft and wet. The hand was about a foot and a half from the bottom of the hole, so it was not much of a job to pull in enough mud to cover it up. Then I took a lot of the soft mud and plastered it thick over the hand and smoothed the whole thing out in nice shape. It narrowed the hole somewhat, but I still had room.

I could figure out now how the hand got loose. The dead man must have been rolled into a hole and covered up. I had shoveled down alongside of him, enlarging my hole, and then the rain came in the night and washed down the rest of the dirt, thus releasing the hand. I could see the marks where the water had run down.

CHAPTER XXX

At 6.30 A.M. I went down the line and told the men we would stay where we were for the day and that they were to keep under cover. No fires were to be lighted, and they were to go easy on their reserve rations, as there was no more food in sight and no more water.

After I got back to my hole, I took off my combat pack again and broke out a package of hardtack and the bacon can. I sliced off a thin piece of the raw issue bacon, nice and fat, and put it between two hardtacks and ate it for breakfast.

The sun gradually broke through the mist and changed the fog out of the valley below us to the rear. This brought to view a lot of French batteries. They were covered with canvas camouflage. Every so often off would go the camouflage, there would be a burst of fire, and on would go the covers again. The French gunners would disappear into their holes. These were 75s. Farther back could be heard the boom of the 155s, and still farther back were the giant United States naval guns. These bigger guns were shelling the back areas of the German lines. Far in the distance we could see a long line of observation balloons. It was very evident that plans for a big attack were being laid. Usually the balloons do not appear in such numbers unless an actual battle is on.

We did not know why the attack was called off that morning and we didn't care. It looked to us as if every-

thing was in readiness, but another day of life, even in a mud hole, seemed good to us.

At noon we heard the distant hum of airplanes. We did not know whether they were our planes or the Germans'. We crouched in our holes out of sight. Soon from out the southern sky like a flock of wild geese came the planes. They were flying high and fast. Over our heads they sailed in V-formation. The first squadron was followed by a second, then another and another — fifteen squadrons in all. It must have been a combined Allied outfit, but we had heard rumors that the Marine Corps had established their own air force, so we thought, here they are!

We watched the planes fly over the German lines. Then *crash — crash — crash!* They laid down a barrage from the air. Twenty of those bombs striking the earth at one time sounded and felt like an earthquake. The ground trembled and shook. Each squadron dropped their bombs and then circled around to the right and flew back over our lines. They came again in the afternoon and gave the Germans another dose. There were no German planes in pursuit that day.

All afternoon there was great activity in back of us. Battery after battery swung into the woods on our left. Soon they began to line up right out in the open. We could see khaki uniforms among them now. We could feel there was something big on foot. All this air bombing and artillery had a meaning.

At 5.30 P.M. a runner came up and told me to report to Lieutenant Deming. I went with the runner. All the platoon sergeants were there, together with the

lieutenants. It was a fairly large metal-covered dugout. I was told that there was a container of hot coffee for the platoon down in back of the woods on our right and to send a detail after it.

I hurried back and sent four men from Larson's squad. Then I went down the line and told the men to break out their canteen cups, that coffee was in sight; that they were to come to my hole in squads, and that each squad should wait until the preceding squad were back in their holes before they came up. The Germans were shelling us, and it wouldn't do to have many men standing around exposed.

It was dark before the coffee detail got back. We all got coffee. Two men carried the empty container back. The detail reported that the road along the wood was lined with United States artillery.

At 9 P.M. I received word to move the platoon up about four hundred yards to a trench running along the crest of the hill. This crowded us up some, but it brought the men together so you could handle them.

At midnight I went down to the lieutenant's dugout to see if he had any orders. I hung around and got filled up on rumors. Rumors are always accepted as facts when they are favorable. . . .

The dope was that Mont Blanc Ridge lay ahead of us . . . That it was the last stronghold on the old Hindenburg Line and commanded Rheims and the surrounding Champagne District . . . That the position was held by the Second German Division, a division that had fought throughout the war and had never lost a battle or given ground . . . That the crack troops of

France, the Chasseurs, had made eight different attacks on the ridge and had been driven back each time . . . That the Second American Division had been lent to the French especially to carry these heights . . . That if we were successful, we were to be granted a special month's leave in Paris . . .

I learned why the morning attack had been called off . . . General Lejeune, commanding the Second Division, made a careful reconnaissance of the positions held by the Germans. . . . He reviewed the artillery preparation that had been made by the French to back us up in the attack. . . . He said it was not sufficient and refused to order us forward. . . . He specified what additional French artillery he wanted and got it. . . . He insisted that the Second Division's own artillery be brought into action . . . That it was now in back of us and also another United States outfit of extra heavy guns had swung into line and were now battering away at the German lines.

This all seemed confirmed from personal observation. We had seen the French additional batteries come up and we knew American artillery was in back of us. We could hear them cursing.

Orders now came in from Battalion Headquarters that we were to attack at five-thirty in the morning . . . that we should be in the fourth wave at an interval of two hundred yards behind the troops in front of us, and that we were to keep in liaison with the French on our left who would be attacking at the same time we were.

There was one gunnery sergeant, a line sergeant, and I with the platoon. I was the only sergeant that had

seen real action. It was also Lieutenant Deming's first time under fire. Our platoon occupied the left flank of our battalion. Although the gunnery sergeant and the other sergeant were older men in service than I was, on account of my experience in actual battle I had been placed in charge of the platoon when we started for the front.

It was decided that I was to get the platoon properly started in the morning and then the other sergeants would take charge with the lieutenant. After the platoon got started, I was to locate the French on our left and keep in liaison with them. This liaison business was new to me.

I went back to the trench where the platoon was, got the corporals together and told them we were to go forward at five-thirty in the morning and that we would start out in formation for moving under enemies' artillery fire. In this formation the men are arranged one behind the other at an interval of five yards. The corporal leads. Each squad is on the same line with an interval of fifteen yards between squads.

I mentioned that I was detailed to keep in liaison with the French troops on our left and for them not to follow me.

Then I passed on all the rumors I had heard and added more to them.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE night before, the hills in back of us had glowed like an ember. To-night, they burst forth like a house on fire. Artillery roared forth without let-up, and all the time it seemed to be getting louder. The Germans were shelling us, too, but we could not even hear their shells explode. It looked as if a great fight was ahead of us.

I advised the corporals to have their men rest with all their equipment on. It always causes confusion in the morning to have a bunch of men fumbling around trying to get into their harness.

We were all sitting crosswise of the trench, sort of half lying, with our backs against the side of the trench. When I closed my eyes, I reviewed my position and planned what to do when I first woke up. I didn't expect to sleep very much, but even an hour's doze makes one wake up dopey.

Four men were assigned to an hour's watch apiece. All they had to do was to sit and stay awake. It was one o'clock then, and I was to be awakened at five. I dozed off and waked up again. I was in a nervous state, but not confused or rattled.

At four-thirty I was wide awake. The stars were shining, and it looked like a clear day ahead. Our artillery had kept up an all-night barrage. At four-thirty they seemed to just double their volume. Usually the last hour they do. Everything goes. Then at zero hour they let up and the rolling barrage starts.

At five, the stars still shining, I got up and went down the trench waking the men up. Coming back, I kept repeating, 'Don't forget your shovels . . . rifles . . . and Chaut-Chaut ammunition. . . . Be sure you have your extra bandolier . . . and grenades. . . . Check up on your equipment.'

Five-twenty and still dark, but you could distinguish a man at two yards. The corporals formed their men on top of the trench. They had to keep close on account of the darkness.

'Stand by to move out!'

'Five-thirty — all right, men, let's go!'

Shells were dropping close and there was some confusion until we got well started. It was still too dark to go looking for the French, so I stuck with the platoon.

Six o'clock. The air was fairly clear. We were on a raised plateau, so we could see a good distance. Across on an adjoining hill were the troops we were to keep two hundred yards behind.

I now started out to the left front to locate the French. It was much easier and faster to travel alone. At six hundred yards from our lines I caught sight of the French line of blue moving forward. They were then on a line with the American outfit that was up ahead of my platoon and at least four hundred yards on the left. This left a space of one thousand yards between the French and American armies.

There was nothing further I could do, so I started back to my own platoon. They were still behind me, as I was moving on a dog-trot. I was on top of a hill and

in the valley below ran a creek. The outfit ahead of my platoon was crossing this creek at various places. The Germans had the slope of the hill and this creek under a most intense fire. It seemed as though they must have it under direct observation, so deadly was their fire.

There was a plank across the creek in one place and the men would gang up here to cross. *Crash!* A shell would land in their midst and men, water, and mud would go spouting up in the air. I watched two hits of this kind.

My platoon was just coming up the slope of the hill behind me. Shells were dropping around them, but nothing like the way the shells were popping on the slope leading down to the creek and in the creek itself. I slipped down the hill toward the advancing men and signaled for them to halt. Then I got the corporals together and explained the situation of the next slope and the creek they would have to cross:

'When you reach the top of this hill, halt your men, then start your men out separately with instructions for each to run down the slope as fast as he can and to cross the creek just where he hits it — no crossing at the plank — and go up the adjoining hill about a quarter way and wait until he is joined by the other men. Give each man a good start before starting off the next.'

I went back up the hill and started down the creek on a run. A shell had hit a bunch of men a minute before I reached the creek. About five men were torn to bits. The creek was one mad whirlpool of blood, arms, legs, mud, and water. Two men were still living and

trying to drag themselves out of the mire on the other side. Other men came running back to help them.

I waded through the creek. It was only about four feet wide and not very deep. Once across, I started right up to get out of the range of falling shells. Halfway up, I stopped to rest. Looking back at the other slope I saw my men just starting to come down. The first and second men made the creek and got across in good shape. The third man fell, hit by shrapnel. The next man stopped and looked at him, then went on.

Looking off to the left front, I tried to get traces of the French, but they were nowhere in sight. There was only one thing for me to do — go looking for them. Climbing higher on the hill, I was met by machine-gun fire. I kept low and ran along below the crest of the hill toward the French. Pretty soon I came to a French soldier lying face down. I shook him, but he was dead. Farther on I saw another blue form. Machine-gun bullets began peppering around me, so I got farther down the hill out of their range. All along here were dead Frenchmen.

Finally I saw the banks of a trench. I crawled over, and standing up against the north back was a line of French soldiers. Some turned when I dropped in, but none of them said anything.

I asked one of them where the officer was and he pointed to the left. I walked down in back of them until I came to a sergeant. I asked him if he was in charge, and he said yes. He could speak pretty good English.

I said, 'How far ahead are your leading troops?'

'We are the first line.'

'The Americans' — pointing to the right — 'have advanced,' I said.

The sergeant shook his head and pointed ahead, 'Boche machine guns there . . .'

Then I asked, 'When will you advance?'

The sergeant waved his hands toward the French soldiers, 'Bokoo mort! . . . *Ra-ta-ta-ta* — artillery. No advance.'

I understood what he meant all right. A great many of his men had been killed by machine-gun fire and before making any further advance the artillery would have to smash up the German machine guns. The French soldiers did not, as a rule, advance against machine guns, and I understood they did not have to.

There was no use of my arguing with him, as he was an old-timer. In fact this outfit was a part of the French Chasseurs, called the Blue Devils, and supposed to be the best fighters in France.

The machine-gun bullets were cracking over the top of the trench and I did not have much desire to get out myself, but I knew my outfit ought to be away up ahead by this time, so I said good-bye to the French sergeant and started back down the trench to my right.

It twisted and curved, but the general direction was north and east. I passed up the French soldiers and traveled a good way without meeting anybody. Then making a sudden turn in the trench, I came upon an American outfit sitting along the trench. I took another good look at them, and saw they were my own platoon. I was rather tired and sat down.

'How many men did you lose, Reed?' I asked.

'Not a one so far.'

'How did the rest of the squads make out?'

'Larson lost one . . . Jenks lost three . . . and Sweet, two.'

'Where are the other sergeants?'

'Franks is here, but I haven't seen the gunnery sergeant.'

Then I saw Sergeant Franks sitting farther down the line, and I went over to see him.

'Is this supposed to be our objective?' I asked him.

'Yes . . . I guess it is. . . . Nobody has ordered us to move . . .'

'What outfit is on your right?'

'I don't know.'

'We'd better find out. . . . This position doesn't look right to me.'

So I said to the fellow on my right, 'Pass the word along and find out what outfit is on our right.'

Each man said to the next one, 'Pass the word along . . . What outfit is on the right?'

I waited and waited, but no answer came back. So I tried it again:

'Find out what outfit is on the right and pass the word back.'

And again no answer came back.

Now I was getting mad. So I shouted down the trench, 'What the hell outfit is on the right?'

It was passed on. Farther down I heard, 'What the hell outfit is on the right? . . . What the hell outfit is on the right?' . . . and so on down.

Still no answer came back.

It was a good-sized trench and I was standing up on a sloping side. I waited a few minutes, then hopped down to the bottom and started for the right to see what was the matter. I traveled a fair stretch and finally came to a sharp turn in the trench. Going around this turn, I saw a communicating trench leading directly north. The first trench ran almost due east. I went down both trenches and the only men I could find were two dead Germans. I came back to the last man of my platoon.

I said to him, 'Who's on your right?'

He said, 'I don't know.'

'Did you get the word to find out who was on your right?'

'Yes, and I passed it on.'

'The hell you did! . . . Get up and I'll show you who's on your right.'

I brought him around the bend and showed him the two Germans with their skulls cracked open. He did not say anything.

Back I went to Sergeant Franks. 'There isn't a damned soul on your right. . . . You're supposed to be away to hell-and-gone up ahead . . .'

Franks: 'Nobody gave us orders to move and we are going to stay here until we get orders.'

I said: 'You had orders starting out to guide right. What the hell more orders do you want?'

Franks: 'I'm in charge here, and we are going to stay here until we get orders to move.'

'You'll do no such a damned thing! . . . Either you

move these men out of here, you yellow bastard, or I'll blow your brains out! . . .'

He did not answer. Then Reed spoke up to me and said, 'Why don't you take us out, Sergeant? . . . Let him stay here if he wants to . . .'

'All right, I will . . .'

Franks walked away, but did not say anything.

I gave orders . . . 'On your feet . . . We are moving out . . .'

The communicating trench with the dead Germans in it led north, so I took it. Reed was right behind me.

He said, 'I know how we got lost. . . . We followed you to the left and Franks followed us. . . .'

I said, 'I wouldn't have said anything if he hadn't refused to move up when he found out he was separated from the company . . .'

Reed: 'He's new at the game . . .'

The machine gun on the left that was keeping the French back was still popping away, although it was not shooting our way. I could not make out just where it was. I passed the word back, 'Keep a lookout on the left for machine guns . . .'

After a time Reed said, 'I think I see where it is . . . See that mound up ahead . . . I saw something move . . .'

The mound was about three hundred yards ahead and all of six hundred yards to the left. When we were about opposite to it on the flank, I halted the platoon. I was sure I saw something move, too.

I said, 'We'll take the first two squads and go over and see what's there.'

Reed and Moran had the first two squads. I noticed Franks at the rear of the column, so I called him up.

'I'm taking two squads across the field to that mound you see sticking up . . . I think there's a machine gun hidden there. . . . Keep your eye on us and send out connecting files when we are out two hundred yards. . . . If you receive any signals, it will be to advance the rest of the platoon . . .'

Franks: 'How will you want us to move up?'

'There will be shooting, so move out as skirmishers and form a line on the men that are firing. . . . If I signal, the connecting files will pass the signal back to you and they will close up to where the first two squads are . . .'

The first two squads went out in four different columns of four men each with instructions that we would deploy as skirmishers about two hundred yards out or sooner in case we were fired on. The Chaut-Chauts were to be on the right and left flanks when we deployed. The men were trained to move under a covering fire from their own line — that is, one group would move forward while the other group was firing.

At one hundred and fifty yards out, two shots cracked over our heads. The Germans generally protect their machine guns with riflemen. The machine gun had been firing to the front, and it would take it a little time to get into a position to deliver a fire to the flank, depending, of course, on the character of its position.

The men dropped and deployed on a line, crawling on their knees. The squad on my right rushed for-

ward twenty-five yards. I went with them. The other squad advanced as soon as we were down.

The mound was a good five hundred yards away and there was no question now but that it held a machine gun, but we did not make a good target to shoot at. The ground we were moving over was very rough and full of shell holes from our barrage of the morning and the night before.

When we had advanced about fifty yards or more, a burst of machine-gun bullets went over our heads. The machine-gunner had swung into position and was finding his range. The squad on the right now opened fire while the left squad went forward from shell hole to shell hole. The left squad then took up positions and opened fire while the right squad advanced.

This kept the Germans worried and they kept shooting high, both the machine gun and rifles. By this method of crawling and shooting, we got within less than two hundred yards of the mound. Then all of a sudden the machine gun stopped firing and we saw two men crawl out and start running toward the left rear. We opened fire on them and one dropped. The other went on a little way and dropped to his knees.

We advanced on the mound. In it was a dead German, shot through the head. Some of the men advanced beyond the mound to get the German who had dropped to his knees. He had risen and was again running. The men opened fire on him, and he dropped.

I looked over the German machine gun and found that it had been damaged by a rifle bullet right where the ammunition belt feeds in.

Reed now came to me and said that he saw some heads popping up back in the direction the Germans had been running for. The distance was between six hundred and eight hundred yards from where we were. The ground rose in that direction to a slight elevation.

The men were all feeling tough, so I decided to take another chance. Looking back, I saw the connecting files from the platoon standing up watching us.

We started forward again, headed for the elevation. This time I sent out three feelers — one man from the left and right flanks and one man in the middle. These feelers went forward at a dog-trot to about two hundred yards ahead. The rest of us advanced in a skirmish line. The ground was much like that we had already come over.

We had traveled a little over two hundred yards when I heard a crack. The man acting as the left feeler crumpled to the ground. There were several more shots and they struck dangerously near. We got down in a crouching position and advanced more slowly. I couldn't see anything to shoot at, but the country up ahead had a peculiar look. A man from the left had been ordered out to take the place of the feeler who had been shot. The middle feeler, Fred, now came crawling back to me.

He said, 'It looks like a trench up ahead . . .'

I took a good look and I was sure, too, that I could trace out the outline of a trench running back toward the forest on the left. It then dawned on me that this section we were in was a part of the German original system of old trenches.

There was only one thing for me to do and that was to find out how strong a force was in the trench. I passed the word along to advance more slowly. Then I made my way over to the right flank and moved out straight for the German position.

In a broken country of this kind a person with a little training can move over the ground without being seen and can approach very close to a position and not be discovered. Thus, by crawling and squirming, I reached to within a hundred yards of the Germans and got a good look at their position. It was very much like the 'point of resistance' that we used to occupy in the old trenches near Verdun — simply a part of a long trench that has been strengthened with sand bags and a firing step arranged so that the men can stand up and sight over the top of the parapet.

The point I was looking at in the German trench was on a sharp bend. The trench ran a zigzag course to the forest in the west. At this point it turned and angled off to the northeast. I counted ten men moving past this bend coming from the north. It was very evident that the Germans were manning their stronghold to resist an attack. They were not doing much firing — simply a few shots now and then, to coax us on. In one sense, it looked as if we were walking directly into a trap.

I got back to the men as quickly as I could. They were now four hundred yards from the German trench. They opened a slow fire. There was a dark spot up in back of the trench that looked like a machine-gun nest, and several fellows concentrated on it. I signaled back

to the connecting file to bring on the rest of the platoon and watched him pass the signal back. Soon the rest of the platoon advanced and I waved for the connecting file to come up.

All of a sudden a machine gun opened up directly in front of us. Then rifles began to crack. The Germans had waked up. They saw more troops advancing. The machine gun was shooting over our heads trying to check the men. We opened fire for all we were worth to cover the advance of the men in the rear, going forward slowly at the same time.

I moved over to the right flank and sent Reed up ahead with his Chaut-Chaut. This would allow him to fire directly into a part of the German trench. Reed could do more damage with a Chaut-Chaut than the average machine-gunner could do with a regular gun. Reed and Long went forward to occupy this advance position.

The German machine gun was ripping up the back area, but men running and ducking are not such good targets, especially over rough ground. One minute I could see our line, the next minute it would vanish. Some of the men were bound to get hit, of course.

We were now two hundred yards in front of the Germans. The rest of the platoon was one hundred yards in our rear.

Just then Moran crawled over from the left flank. He was out of breath. 'The Germans are advancing in the open on our left!'

A long line of Germans was advancing parallel to the trench. They must have come down the trench from

the forest and then swung out into the open. It looked as though they were going to envelop us on the left. The only thing I could see to do was to swing the platoon around in back of the German stronghold. This would put one bunch of Germans in the path of the other. Besides, it would be easier to attack the stronghold from the rear.

The Germans on the left were advancing rapidly. They were about six hundred yards away. The fire from the German trench and the machine gun was pouring in on us and it made us stay down, but the rough ground gave us good shelter.

The whole platoon was now on the firing line. I passed the word down to the right flank to swing in the rear of the German stronghold. We were now on a line with Reed and Long. A short way ahead I could see the remains of a barbed-wire entanglement that our artillery had torn up the night before.

The German rifle fire seemed to slacken, although the machine gun kept going. The men to the right of Reed had made a fifteen-yard rush. The Germans must have seen them and realized that they were trying to get in their rear and were rushing men around to that side to prevent it.

The right makes another rush . . . A line of bayonets sticks up over the German trench . . . They are going to charge the right flank. The Germans in the open are now sweeping in on our left. . . . Their line extends away beyond our left flank. . . . The Germans nearest the trench are down and are coming toward us, firing as they come, but they are not moving as fast as the

men farther out in the field. . . . The machine gun is still working in the center . . .

The Germans on the right are coming out of the trench. . . . They are out to stop us, also to flank us on the right. . . . Our men meet them with heavy fire, but more Germans keep coming . . . The Germans rise to charge . . .

Just then I hear heavy firing on my left, but the right seems to be the important side to me, and I order the men on the center right to move over more to the right . . . If we can meet the German advance on that side and drive them back into the trench, there is a chance that we can also capture the trench and hold it against the Germans now advancing on our left . . .

More heavy firing on the left. . . . The Germans in front of us outside the trench have ceased firing. . . . They begin falling back. . . . Some are getting down into the trench . . . The fire on the left continues. . . . Now I see Germans, who were closing in on our left flank, running toward the rear. . . .

I turn my head to the left to see what is happening. . . . And there, not more than five hundred yards away, is a long line of blue-uniformed French soldiers and they are coming like the wind! The Germans are fleeing before them . . . Some of the Germans come crashing into our line on the left . . . They are quickly shot down . . . The men on the right flank are still hard-pressed, so I rush all the men from the left over to help them out. The French can take care of the left.

The Germans have us flanked on the right, but with the additional men from the left, we even things up.

The Germans have got partly through their broken barbed wire.

The cry goes down our line: 'The French are coming! . . . The French are coming! . . .'

And witnout waiting for any command to charge, our men get up and hit straight for the Germans. The Germans have just risen. We fire as we advance. There is a wild scramble of men in the barbed wire. It is bayonets now — hand to hand. One German comes lunging at me. He trips, and I run him through the neck. Luckily the bayonet cuts its way through the side and frees itself.

The Germans are falling back. Some turn and run for the trench. It is a hollering, crying mass, tripping and falling, cutting and slashing. Some fight with the bayonet only. Some smash in with the butt. Here is a man tussling to get his bayonet out of a German who is still wriggling. . . . Here are a couple staging a real thrust-and-parry contest. . . . And here's a case that needs immediate attention — both men have their bayonets stuck in each other's breasts and each is pressing the point home. My automatic blows the top of the German's head off. The German's rifle and bayonet drop to the ground. Our man falls back. The point of the bayonet had pierced his gas mask and was cutting through the ribs. I told the fellow to hold the wound shut with his fingers. . . . Reed smashes a German in the face with the butt of his Chaut-Chaut. . . . Several of our men are lying dead . . .

Over on the left the French have reached the trench. . . . There are mad cries from their direction. . . . Fi-

nally we force the Germans back to the trench also. Some try to give up, but it is too late. . . . The fight in the trench is short, deadly, and messy. In a few minutes it is over. A few Germans are running across the field toward the woods. The rest are dead or nearly so.

The trench occupied by the Germans ran due east from the woods to the point where they had established their stronghold. At this place the trench made a sharp turn and ran straight north for a short distance and then angled off to the northeast. The trench was at least eight feet deep, with wide sloping banks. The top of it was overgrown with grass.

The 'stronghold,' or 'point of resistance,' extended completely around the bend. Twenty feet at least commanded the southern advance and the same number of feet commanded the eastern advance. This 'point' had been shaped out, and the banks both front and rear had been sliced down, leaving vertical walls. The top of the outer bank was reënforced with sand bags, and there were openings at various intervals for riflemen. It looked as if these sand bags had been there for a long time. Grass was growing in between them.

Our dead and wounded were picked up and brought into the trench. All together we had six dead and fifteen wounded. This left us with forty-five men out of the platoon of sixty-six we had started out with in the morning.

I went over to see how the French were. It was the same bunch of Blue Devils I had met farther back. I found the sergeant and shook hands.

I said, 'You came at a good time.'

Sergeant: 'We saw you advance on machine gun . . . no good . . . no good. . . . Then we saw you go beyond. . . . Later I see Germans come out of trees. You not fall back . . . we must come up . . .'

There must have been at least sixty Germans in the trench when we made our attack and the French sergeant estimated the number of Germans that advanced in the open to be one hundred. On the field across which the Blue Devils charged we counted ten dead Germans, and in that part of the trench occupied by the Blue Devils we counted nineteen dead Germans. From the looks of them they had all been killed by bayonets.

The French lost only one man in the attack.

In the field and in the trench that we (the Americans) fought over, we counted thirty-six dead Germans. Eight wounded Germans were picked up. The French had rounded up forty or fifty prisoners, who were now sitting in a group outside the trench. I asked the sergeant if he would mind taking care of our wounded, as I wanted to get going again. He said all right and gave an order. Soon a couple of his men had a detail of German prisoners to carry back the wounded.

I did not see any French officers, but I understood from the sergeant that the French left flank, which was close to the woods, was having a hard time to advance and were holding up the center and right flank. When I mentioned officers, he pointed to the left flank, so they were probably directing affairs over on that side.

The German machine gun was too heavy to carry. The French sergeant dismounted it then and prepared to carry part of it away.

When I was leaving the French sergeant, he pointed at the German machine gun and then turned and pointed back to where the line of French soldiers lay dead and said, 'My comrades . . . avenged!' Then he spat toward the German dead.

CHAPTER XXXII

We started north along the trench. The men were all excited and talking it over. It was their first real hand-to-hand fight. We met a bunch of signal-corps men and asked them if they had seen anything of the Sixth Marines. They pointed up to the northeast and said all the outfits were somewhere up in those trees. They also said there was a long communication trench half a mile over on the right that led directly up there. We got out of the trench we were in and started across country for the other trench. The platoon was split up into groups, as the Germans were dropping shells again.

We found the trench all right and made good time. We ran across lots of dead and wounded Germans, but none of our own men. Nearing the woods, we met Big Tex, of the Third Platoon, coming our way. He had his hand bandaged up.

I said, 'What happened, Tex?'

'Just a little nick . . .'

Somebody said, 'Bon blessé, Tex.'

I said, 'Is our outfit up ahead?'

Tex said, 'Yes, follow the trench to the end.... They are off on your left in the woods.'

We did, and as soon as we got to the woods we sat down for a rest. Lieutenant Mansfield, of the Battalion Scouts, came along. He used to be in charge of this Fourth Platoon before he was put in charge of

the Battalion Scouts. The old-timers used to call him Hard-Boiled Mansfield. Still they used to like him pretty well.

He talked to Reed and a few of the others of the old bunch. Then, coming to me, he said, 'What's the idea of being back here?'

I said, 'We got separated from the company . . .'

'Well, the company's up ahead — you'd better join them.'

He passed on, and as soon as we were rested we started on again. After a while we came to the place where the company was dug in, and I told the fellows they had better dig in along the same general line.

Then I went to look for Lieutenant Deming. I found him in a dugout that had formerly been used by the Germans. It was a very deep one. I told him the Fourth Platoon was now in position with the rest of the company. I don't believe he knew they had been missing.

He said: 'We will have to have a guard out to-night. You had better take charge of them yourself.'

'Just a company guard?' I asked.

'Yes . . . the captain is down a way in a dugout if you want to see him.'

The captain and some of the lieutenants were down in a forty-foot dugout, so I took Moran's squad and posted them close by it. It was getting dark, and I sat down at the mouth of the dugout to wait.

Pretty soon the German artillery got busy dropping shells in the valley below us — in the rear. Now and then a shell landed up close to where we were. Hits

were made and I could hear the wounded call out. Some of the shells passing overhead had a slushy, wobbly sound. I knew they were full of gas. It was hard to tell how close they were landing, as they exploded with a muffled sound. I was Company Gas Non-Com and it was up to me to be on the lookout for gas.

The dugout the captain was in was a deep U-shaped affair with two big mouths which opened toward the German lines. I had a picture of a shell dropping into one of the mouths or entrances to the dugout. It would make a horrible mess, as there were quite a few men down at the bottom.

The gas shells kept coming over, and I got uneasy, so I climbed down to the bottom of the dugout and told the captain the Germans were dropping gas shells close by and that the gas would finally settle down in these dugouts.

The captain said, 'See if you can find out how close they are dropping and let me know.'

I climbed up again. You couldn't pay me to stay in that dugout. I would rather take my chances on the top side.

I posted one man at the dugout as gas sentry and then started back through the trees in our rear to find out where the gas shells were landing. It was pitch dark and there was a heavy undergrowth among the trees.

Once in a while I could catch the faint odor of mustard, but not enough to hurt anybody. I stood at the edge of the woods for some time sniffing the air.

The wind was blowing from the west. Suddenly I heard a *pluff* sound, as though somebody had dropped a bag of water. There was also a light explosion — then another landed. The gas shells were landing in a cleared space about fifty feet away. I saw the grayish vapor rise and gently float away to the east. I was glad the wind was in the west.

It was a clear October night. No moon, but millions of bright stars. I walked along the edge of the woods toward the west until I came to the western boundary. There was another wide open space across which I could see another dark wood. Gas shells were dropping out in this open space also, so I started back through the woods toward our camp, sniffing the air as I went along. It seemed bad in spots, but clear in others.

A machine gun suddenly opened up in the west, shooting toward the south. Soon the bullets swept over my head and then the sound died away to the north. I crouched down. Soon I heard it coming back from the north — *rat-a-tat-a-tat* — then *crack*, CRACK, CRACK! over my head and then *crack*, *crack*, *rat-a-tat-a-tat*, as it swept away to the south. Just some German machine-gunner who was sweeping back and forth with his gun. He sprinkled shells around for about ten minutes and then turned in.

Back in the dugout I reported to the captain that the shells were hitting close, but so far with the wind in the west we were all right.

But not long after this I heard the soft explosions near by in the trees and soon I got a strong odor of gas.

I hollered down the dugout, 'Gas!'

Some one answered, 'All right.'

I put the clippers on my nose and held the mouthpiece to my mouth, but did not put on the mask proper. I passed down the line waking up the men and shouting, 'Gas! . . . Gas! . . .'

The shells were now hitting around us thick. When I got back to the captain's dugout, the man on guard told me the lieutenant wanted to see me. I beat it over to his dugout and found him huddled up in a corner half dead. They were dragging out a couple of fellows, and I heard that a shell had hit in the opening of the dugout wounding them.

The lieutenant was the only one that was not actually hit, but the concussion had knocked him out.

'That you, Sergeant?' he said.

'Yes.'

'Stay with me! . . .' He put his mask on.

This day he had seen his first battle. Somebody had told him back at Gondrecourt, where they held a school for officers, that the practice trenches and the hardships they had to endure while training were a lot worse than they would find under actual fighting conditions, but he had found out that there is a lot of difference between a shell screaming over your head at a training camp simply looking for a place to land and one screaming toward your head looking for you to land on. It's got a different sound altogether. Your own barrage sounds musical and has a rhythmical order to it — *shoo-shoo* — like sighs; they go over your head and you hear the distant bang. But the sound of shells looking for you is nothing but rank discord.

I stuck around in the hole for a while, but I didn't like being in any of those German dugouts.

Finally I said: 'You'd better move over to the captain's dugout. It's forty feet deep. Only a direct hit can get it.'

I got him up and helped him across to the deep dugout and down the steps of the first entrance. The holes joined at the bottom. A blanket had been hung across the middle of the dugout and the captain and his crew were on one side and just a bunch of men on the other side. They also had a blanket over the opening leading in from the entrance.

I pushed the blanket aside and told the lieutenant to cross over to the other side where the captain was. But he said it was all right here with the men and sat down.

The other fellows in the hole were sitting around a short piece of lighted candle playing black-jack for cigarettes. They all had their gas masks on, so they couldn't talk and they would tap with their fingers, meaning, 'Hit me,' and then hold out their hand when they had enough. It was a nice quiet game — no cursing or arguments.

CHAPTER XXXIII

I LEFT the lieutenant there and went up to the top side again. I tested the air to see if the gas was clearing away, but it was still strong, so I kept my mask on.

Soon I heard the *put-put* of a Chaut-Chaut on our left. I listened, then again it went — *put-put-put* — a longer string this time. Our whole left flank was open for ten kilometers or more. It was up to each company to protect its own flank. The Chaut-Chaut opened up again.

I went over to Moran and said, 'Five men,' pointing to the left. (You don't say much when you've got a gas mask on.) I wanted five men to go with me to see what was happening.

Moran got the men together. Men with gas masks on are a dopey lot. They bump into each other, hold their breath, and then *blah-h-h* it out the flutter valve. They are not so bad when sitting quietly, but just as soon as they have to move they get to adjusting the mask and helmets drop off. It's hard to hold your helmet on when you've got the mask on your face.

But finally we got started. I left my rifle with the gas sentry near the deep dugout, but I had an automatic and a good trench knife — one of those three-edged triangular daggers with the saw-tooth handle guard. A rifle with bayonet is an awkward thing in thick woods. If you hold it at trail, it catches in the underbrush. If you hold it at port or any position in front of you, it keeps bumping against trees. Still they

are handy outfits to have along if anything breaks. But I figured that if we were having a hard time getting through these trees, so would the Germans. They could not see any better in the dark than we could, and so long as there was gas, they would have to wear gas masks, so things sort of evened themselves up.

We stumbled along through the trees, stepping in on top of a man now and then. He may have cursed us out, but he did it to himself. The gas masks are good that way — they make a fine gag.

We reached the man who had been firing the Chaut-Chaut — he was the last man on the left — and I knelt down beside him and slipped back the cloth part of my mask so I could talk better.

'What's the matter?' I said.

'*Blub-blub-b*,' pointing to some woods across in front of him. He was trying to talk with the mouthpiece in his mouth. Some fellows never would learn how to talk with a mask on. This fellow would have the whole rubber tube leading from the canister full of spit in no time. I could tell from the way he was slobbering around that it would not do to have him talk much.

I said: 'Don't try to talk. . . . Are they there now?' pointing across the way. He nodded his head.

'Shoot a burst across . . .'

He opened up. I wanted to see what spot he had in mind.

I said, 'I'm going across . . .'

He nodded.

Just then a voice on my right said, 'That you, Nap?'

There were only three men left in the company that

knew me as 'Nap.' They were Young, Dale, and Bendow, of the original First Platoon.

I remembered now that the captain had mentioned that the First Platoon was on the left flank. The man that spoke was about three feet away, but it was hard to recognize a voice through a gas mask.

I shifted over and said, 'Young?'

The answer was 'Yes.'

Young and I had worked together in the dark before, so I decided to take him across in the other woods with me rather than pick out a new man, and I said to him, 'Come on across with me.'

Young got up and I led the way to the left where the woods ended. We got clear of the trees and brambles and then we started to snake across the open place on our bellies. It was only about twenty-five yards over to the other woods. Reaching the woods, we crept in. All woods at night look alike. In fact, there is no look. About fifteen or twenty feet in, I stopped to listen, but could hear no sound. We moved down about twenty-five feet and I was about to give it up as a dud when I heard a twig crack. The sound came from the edge of the woods nearest our lines. The open space we had come across was east of these woods. This open space was light compared to the darkness of the woods and by looking through the trees toward the lighter place I could detect any movement that might take place between me and the space. It was like being in a dark room looking out into a lighter room.

I was sure I saw a bush move. There was a slight rustle ahead.

I whispered to Young, 'Cover that spot. . . . Shoot fairly high . . .'

Then I started forward toward the spot on my hands and knees. By placing one hand carefully ahead and removing any sticks, then bringing the knee up to the spot occupied by the hand, it is not hard to move through woods at night without making a noise.

I was getting close to the edge when I heard a whisper. I stopped and took a good look ahead. The eye-pieces of my gas mask blurred my vision, so I slipped the mask partly off. Then I remembered that I had not tested the air in these woods for gas, so I removed the nose clippers and took a short sniff. The air seemed clear, so I took the mask off altogether. With the mask off I felt freer to move.

Just then I saw a pot-shaped head rise up in the opening between two trees. Then it lowered again. There was no mistaking a German helmet for an American helmet, even in the dark.

I lay flat and got my automatic out — then rising on my elbows with my left hand supporting my right wrist, I took aim on the spot where I had seen the head. It came up and I fired. The head dropped. I knew I had hit. I crept closer, and could hear a muttering of voices. They couldn't tell very well which way the shot came from. I aimed to the left of the last shot and fired again. Just then a rifle cracked and I heard a bullet whizz over my head. It was Young firing.

I crawled toward the left, as I figured the Germans would run that way in leaving. A form arose ahead of me and at the same time Young's rifle cracked again.

The man stumbled forward and nearly fell over me. He was carrying something because I heard it thump against a tree. He was lying a foot or so ahead of me. I couldn't tell whether he was dead or not, so I eased forward on my belly with my head raised. There was a flash just ahead of me, and I heard a *ting* from my helmet. My right hand was in front of me holding the automatic. It was not more than a foot from the man lying down. I fired. I heard a sort of 'ugh.' Still holding the automatic trained on the man, I squirmed forward. My left hand came in contact with his hand holding a revolver. He made no move. His head was lying between his outstretched arms. I pushed the head. It rocked kind of limply, so I knew he was dead. Lying beside his body was a light German machine gun. He must have been carrying it.

I remained quiet for a few moments. It's always a question how many Germans are used to form a machine-gun post. It might be anywhere from three to six. I couldn't hear any movement, so I called to Young in a fairly loud voice, 'Young, take off your mask. There isn't any gas here . . . But keep down.'

Soon I heard Young's voice, 'Shall I come ahead?'

'Yes, crawl over.'

I heard him coming and kept saying, 'Over here,' in a low voice until he finally reached me.

He said, 'What's that beside you?'

'A dead German . . . There must be one or two more over there on the right . . . This one was making away with the machine gun. You nipped him first, I think.'

We crawled over to the spot at the edge of the woods

and there were two more Germans lying there. I shook them to see if they were dead, and they were. The small tripod was still up in place and two cans of ammunition lay alongside of it.

I said: 'Let's go back to the outfit. I don't believe there are any more Germans around here.'

We crawled down to the spot where we had first entered the woods. I called across before starting, 'Coming across, Moran.'

Then we ran across in a crouching position. The men still had their masks on. I couldn't smell any gas on this side either, so I told them to take off their masks.

There wasn't anything else to do around there, and I told Moran to get his men up and we would go back to the dugout. I said good-bye to Young, and told him if he wanted a machine gun to pick up the one across the way in the morning.

Moran and I went on a little ahead of his men to see that there was no gas. The air was practically clear. I kept saying to the men who had holes along where we were traveling, 'No gas . . . no gas.' Some of them took their masks off. The others made no move. They were either asleep or dead.

Reaching the deep dugout, I sniffed around, but the air seemed clear. I didn't know how it was at the bottom of the dugout. Usually the gas settled in such places and remained there for some time. I was figuring on whether to go down or not because I was tired and the climb up and down those steps — there must have been seventy-five or a hundred of them — was a goat-getter.

Just then somebody climbed out of the dugout. It was Ben Lanson and he was a sick man. He vomited for a while and then asked me if there was any gas. I said no.

Lanson said, 'That damned hole is full of it.'

It was past midnight. Things had quieted down somewhat, though there were still shells, so I went over to the shallow dugout the lieutenant had been in and told the fellow on guard to tell Lieutenant Deming where I was.

Pretty soon somebody else came crawling into the hole. It was the lieutenant. He couldn't stand the other dugout either.

I dozed off. It had been a long day — no food, no water.

CHAPTER XXXIV

EARLY the next morning I was awakened by somebody calling:

'Where's the Ninety-Seventh Company's headquarters?'

I looked up and saw a Third Battalion runner. I knew him by sight, but not by name.

I pointed to the deep dugout. 'The captain is down in that dugout. Watch out for gas at the bottom.'

He went down, and I waited until he came up again.

I asked, 'Anything doing this morning?'

'Yes, the Third Battalion is to advance at seven o'clock.'

It was six then, so I started down the line, waking the men up. It was still pretty hazy and the men were dopey. Some still had their gas masks on from the night before. I had to prod some of them with the butt end of my rifle to wake them up. I placed the butt on their combat packs and then jiggled them up and down, saying, 'Stand by! . . . We are moving forward.'

Some of the fellows were burrowed in along a bank. Their feet were sticking out. I called them, and if they did not answer I kicked the soles of their feet until they did answer or got up. One fellow I called and called, 'Hey, wake up — wake up.' No answer. I kicked him on the feet, but no move. I kicked a little harder. Still no move. I got down and crawled part way in and grabbed him by the seat of his breeches and started to

yank him out, saying, 'What the hell is the matter with you?' He did not answer. He was dead.

At seven o'clock the company was moving forward. When we cleared the woods, we faced a long stretch of open country. The area we now occupied was the southern portion of the summit of Mont Blanc. The northeastern portion of the summit was still in the hands of the Germans.

The artillery hadn't caught up with us yet — I guess they didn't know where we were — so we had to advance without any artillery support. The Germans were meeting our advance with severe machine-gun fire which poured in on us from the front and left. The men would rise to rush forward and would drop in their tracks.

I realized that the old 'rush and flop' system was not working quite right, so I passed the word down to my men, 'Crawl forward and keep down low.'

The ground we were crawling over had a thick layer of slate-covered dust. The machine-gun bullets whipped it up into a regular cloud which screened our movements, but which also shut out our view.

We kept firing blindly ahead and advancing steadily. Finally we crawled out of the dust into a harder ground and got a glimpse of what was ahead of us. We saw a row of peculiar mound-shaped objects rising from the ground to the height of eight or nine feet. The machine-gun fire was coming from their direction and we could also see men moving around them. We opened up with our rifles. The men disappeared and the machine-gun fire slackened down.

On reaching these mounds, we discovered that they were the backs of deep dugouts. The entrances were on the other side, facing north. The mud that had been taken out of the dugouts had been piled up in back. You could not see to the bottom of these dugouts. They were dark-looking old holes with broad steps leading down.

Outside of one dugout was a stack of German grenades, the potato-masher type. I called over Gray and Fred and gave them four each. As I came to a dugout I would holler, 'Look out below!' and then heave in a grenade.

The potato-mashers had quite a kick. I couldn't hear them strike bottom, but I could hear the report. I was the only one around that knew the trick of pulling the potato-masher's string, so I had the fun of bombing out all the dugouts. This was the first chance I had had to put to use the training I had received at the bombers' school.

At the next dugout, just as the grenade left my hand, a face appeared coming out of the gloom below. Too late. The grenade smacked him full in the face. He threw up his hands and fell backwards into the darkness. That was one German that hesitated too long.

Coming around the corner of the last dugout, I ran into Dale, of the First Platoon. I hadn't seen him since Soissons.

'Hello, Dale.'

'Hello, Nap.'

'Where did you get all the corporal stripes?'

Dale: 'They hung them on me just before Saint-Mihiel.'

'Stick around long enough and they'll make you a sergeant.'

'It gets harder and harder to stick around. . . . We've just carried Young and Sergeant Rockwell away . . .'

'Young!' . . . When did he get hit?'

Dale: 'Just a few minutes ago when that last bunch of whizz-bangs landed around here . . . They were both hit at the same time . . . Rockwell's leg was smashed up . . . Young is in pretty bad shape . . .'

CHAPTER XXXV

I WENT over to where our fellows were standing around the deep dugouts watching to see if anybody came out. Some of them were firing their rifles into the holes.

'Now, what the hell are you doing?' I said.

'We were just shooting down in there to hear the echo.'

Then another one of the new men said, 'Let's go down and see what's there . . .'

I said: 'No, you don't! There might be trip cords stretched across the steps that would set off mines . . .'

'Aw, that's just talk . . . the Germans don't really do that, do they?'

'The hell they don't! . . . I saw one case of it, near Haudemont, and that's all I ever want to see! . . . Eight men were shot from the mouth of a dugout like so much scrap! . . . The best way to explore a dugout is with grenades.'

Another bunch of the men were fooling around with a German machine gun trying to get it to work, but the Germans had put it out of commission before leaving.

I finally gathered together what was left of the platoon — three corporals and twenty-two privates. We crossed over and took up positions along the edge of the woods, facing west. Our platoon was on the extreme right of the company, but another bunch of the Sixth Marines was on our right around the curve of

the woods. Out in front of us was an open space that ran north and south for a way. A short distance to the right of where our platoon was located, the trees that bordered the space angled off to the northwest. Across from us, a distance of a hundred yards, was another wood which was held by the Germans. We could see their built-up positions for machine guns and riflemen.

We opened up with a heavy rifle and automatic fire and the Germans answered us back with machine guns and rifles. We were too close together for either of our artilleries to butt in.

Reed was next to me on the right with his Chaut-Chaut. A Chaut-Chaut has a tendency to hop. It's a Frog invention, and it takes all your time to hold it down.

I touched Reed on the shoulder to point out to him a spot that looked like a machine gun. This took Reed's attention from his Chaut-Chaut for a moment, and it gave a hop which threw the muzzle up, causing it to shoot into the tree-tops across the way. And out of the tree dropped a German!

Lieutenant Deming was lying on my left popping away with a rifle when up came the company runner with an order from the captain:

'Swing your platoon across the open space. The First Platoon' (which was on our left) 'is to push through the woods and head off the Germans on that side.'

'And we have to go across that open place!' I was mad. 'That looks like plain murder to me . . . Damned funny to me they don't lay down a barrage in there first — it's full of machine guns . . .'

The runner didn't say anything and neither did the lieutenant.

I went on cursing, but I knew there wasn't anything else for us to do but carry out the order. In order to avoid the fire from Reed's Chaut-Chaut, I crawled away in back of him.

The brambles and underbrush were so thick all along the edge of the woods that I had to crawl quite a way before I could get out in the open far enough for the other fellows to see me. The men were still firing in back of me. When I figured I was out far enough, I held up my hand as a signal to cease firing. Then I rose to my feet and beckoned them to come on, and I started forward on a dead run.

Looking back over my shoulder, I saw a whole gang of our men burst out of the woods after me. We tore madly across the open space without stopping once. As long as it had to be done, that was the best way to do it.

Our attack was so sudden and so wild that it must have thrown the Germans into a panic. They had been firing steadily before we started, but the moment we broke out into the open, they began to beat it for all they were worth.

They didn't all get away. Some were hidden down behind a low embankment. As I jumped over the bank, two young Germans — and they were *young!* — raised their heads. If ever there was fear of God or the Devil on anybody's face, it was on those two boys' faces. They got on their knees with their arms stretched to the sky. They could not cry out. Their fingers took on a most peculiar trembling motion while the rest of the

hand seemed rigid. Then their lips began to move, but no sound came.

This all took place in a moment of time. I was still coming toward them with raised bayonet. There were other fellows at my side. We had come to kill and that was all. The boys finally gave one shriek. Something seemed to snap inside of me. I pushed the fellows who were racing with me to one side, and they stumbled past the two German boys and their bayonets stuck in the dirt bank.

One of the fellows turned and said, 'What the hell is the matter with you?'

I did not answer right away, as I did not know what to say or what was the matter with me. The two German boys were still on their knees before me, and they were begging for their lives. Their voices, their whole bodies, in fact, seemed to breathe out for permission to live.

Just then several Germans made a dash into a thicket on our right. I shouted to the fellows, 'Get them!' and away they went.

Then I motioned for the two young Germans to get up. They scrambled to their feet in a hurry. By this time there were more German prisoners rounded up, and I simply shooed my two boys over with the rest to get rid of them.

The section of the woods we were in had been cleared out of brush to a depth of about two hundred feet. Behind this to the west was a thick undergrowth of bushes and brambles. The Germans were in this thicket and we advanced on them in a sort of Indian

fashion — ducking forward from tree to tree, but with no organization. Some of the men would advance and some would not. We were not getting anywhere.

I looked around for some officer I might know, but could not see any. In fact, I did not seem to know any of the fellows that were fighting around me. I called to the men that were up ahead to fall back. We took shelter for a few minutes behind what seemed to be an old basement that had been overgrown with grass. There were about twenty of us together. However, on our left there were quite a number of men who were taking up position.

'We'll form a line to the right and sweep in back of the Germans and drive them to the left and capture them. We'll pivot on this center position.'

The men spread out to the right at ten-foot intervals. I was the last man on the right. As soon as we were ready to make the pivot, the men on the left began falling back and the men on the right that had just formed kept closing over to the left. This broke up our little party, and in the mean time the Germans were delivering a hot fire from the thicket. So instead of advancing, we on the right were having our hands full trying to stay where we were.

The men in the center were shot up pretty badly, and I could not see any men on the left. That left about fifteen of us marooned. I passed the word along to close over to the left. I wanted to get back to that old basement. A machine gun was tearing the bark off a tree just above my head and was getting my goat.

There was a hole a few feet to my left, and I wormed

over to it and slid in, luckily feet first, and — more luck — I held on to the sides. It was rather narrow. I felt my feet sinking, so I quickly drew out of the hole. It was an old abandoned latrine with a thick crust on it.

I kept edging over to the left, urging the men to move in that direction. Finally twelve of us reached the old basement wall and opened up a hot rifle fire into that part of the thicket in front of which our wounded men were lying.

Our fire piped down the Germans, and with seven of us still firing, the other five crept out and dragged in the wounded — there were seven of them — and laid them in the shelter of the basement wall. The wounds were all from rifle or machine-gun bullets, so we bound them up. Two of the men were in bad shape. They had been shot through the lungs and were spitting up blood.

Four men were detailed to carry them back to the rear where we could see some of the mounds belonging to the deep dugouts. The rest of us kept up a fire to cover their movement. Every time our fire slackened down, the Germans would pipe up again.

Two other fellows agreed each to carry back a wounded man on his back. They got ten feet out from the basement and both were hit. They fell and the wounded men they were carrying fell on top of them. So we had to go out and drag in the four. This left us with seven wounded and six good ones. One of the wounded men figured he could crawl back himself, so we let him go and he made it all right.

We heard somebody shouting from the rear and,

looking back, I saw that it was Lieutenant Kelton of our company. He was frantically waving his arms at us and shouting, 'Get out of there — quick!'

'We've got wounded men!' I shouted, but no doubt he couldn't make out what I said because he just kept on waving us out.

So we agreed each to carry out a man. There were six of us now and six wounded men. Three went first while the others kept up firing. The first three had about reached the mounds when the last of us started out.

The fellow I was carrying had been shot in the legs. He was taller than I, and it seemed no matter how far I bent forward his legs would drag. But he did not complain. The other two fellows that were with me were both hit and fell with their men.

Reaching the mounds, I found a confused mess of Germans and Americans. They were busy bandaging up wounded men. Some of the wounded were Germans, but most of them were Americans. The Germans were bandaging up our men, and if a German was next, an American would bandage him up. There were no guards standing around.

After I got rid of my man, I rounded up five Germans and marched back through the woods where the four wounded men were still lying and had them carry the men in. The Germans in the thicket must have recognized their own men, as they did not open fire on them.

The bunch of us left all seemed to be out of different companies. I did not see one other man from my own company. We were all milling around looking for our

companies, but nobody seemed to know what had become of them. The big mounds of dirt were thick around this place and they cut off our voices. They were not the same mounds as those I was among in the morning. We kept wandering around these mounds shouting the names of our companies. And the Germans kept trailing after us wanting to be taken prisoners.

What made matters worse was the report that our artillery was to lay down a barrage in this area in a very short time. The Germans that were with us had the dope that their artillery also was going to lay down a barrage in this very same area in a few minutes. So they were anxious to be captured as quickly as possible in order to be taken out of there.

The Germans, of course, were not armed. Most of them had come in from the woods themselves. They understood that they had been surrounded and were giving up. Now and then a new German would come in from the woods with his hands up and insist upon being captured. One got in front of a big Marine — we were all Marines for that matter — who had come around the side of a mound rather suddenly. The German had his hands up, blocking the way. The Marine shoved him over, saying, 'For Christ's sake, get out of the way and go back where you belong.'

It was getting on toward dark, and I knew something had to be done with the Germans, so I lined them up in back of a dugout, made them sit down, and placed a couple of guards over them. I was the only sergeant there that I could see, and I didn't want some officer to

come along and find the Germans wandering around the way they were. There were only thirty of them when I finally got them all together.

The thing that was bothering me was that I was lost — lost, at least, as far as my company was concerned.

I wandered back a little way farther and noticed a man jumping down into a trench. I beat it across for the spot — about two hundred yards away. Reaching the trench I jumped in and the first man I saw was Lieutenant Kelton of my company, dug in along the side. He looked up at me.

'Where did you come from?' He spoke sharply. 'Your lieutenant has been looking for you.'

I was pretty well bushed from running, but I asked what he wanted me for.

Kelton said, 'Maybe he thought you had beat it somewhere . . .'

'Beat it, hell! I was up in that old basement directing fire and you were the one that ordered me out!'

'Were you?' Kelton looked as if he didn't believe me. 'Well, your lieutenant is down the trench a way. Perhaps you'd better tell him about it.'

I hoofed it down the trench until I found Lieutenant Deming. He was dug in and so was the rest of the platoon.

I stuck my head into his hole. 'Did you want to see me?'

He looked up kind of fussed. 'Why, I . . . just wondered where you were.'

I said, 'Where I was? What do you mean?'

'Oh, nothing. I missed you, that's all.'

And he wouldn't say anything more, but I knew that both he and Kelton had the idea, for some reason or other, that I had beat it somewhere.

Just then the fellow in the next hole reached out and touched me on the leg, saying, 'There's a hole down the line, Sergeant, that's vacant.'

It was getting dark, but I recognized the voice as belonging to young Fred.

I found the vacant hole and crawled in. It was just a common hole in the bank. This was the first chance for a rest I had had in several days, but I was worse than tired. I was confused. I couldn't understand why Kelton and Deming should think I had run out on them when I myself felt that I had done a good day's work. Certainly Deming knew where I had been . . .

Then it suddenly came to me that I hadn't seen Deming all day . . . But the other fellows . . . Then I remembered that I hadn't been with any of the fellows from my platoon . . . In the old basement, the wounded the fight before the thicket . . . all those men with me all day were strangers . . .

I was more confused than ever. I had to get this thing straightened out somehow before I could sleep. I went back to Fred's hole.

'Say, Fred, were you out along that patch of woods this morning just after we left those deep dugouts?'

'Yes.'

'Then you were with us when we swung across that open space . . .'

'Open space? We didn't go across the open space . . .'

'Didn't go across the open space? . . . Where the hell did we go then?'

'We followed the First Platoon off to the left through the woods . . .'

'And you say we didn't run across that open space?'

'We couldn't, because as we started for the left a big bunch of guys from another outfit came tearing across the space like mad . . .'

'Oh . . . All right, Fred.'

The thing began to dawn on me . . .

I went back to my hole and thought it all out . . .

I had been lying between Deming and Reed, I remembered, when the runner came up with the order to advance and I had shot off my mouth. (Maybe that was one reason why Deming thought I had beat it somewhere.) . . . Then I had crept out, back of Reed, who was the last man on the right, to avoid his Chaut-Chaut and the brush . . . I went out in the open . . . My platoon was all on my left . . . But I did not move left . . . all this time I had been moving to my right . . How then did I get in front of the platoon? . . .

I stood up when I got well out in the open and faced south . . . There was a wood in back of me and I beckoned toward it for the men to come out and a bunch of fellows did come out and we tore across the open space from north to south . . . The men came out of the north woods . . . Yet my platoon was in the east woods . . .

It was all clear to me now . . . I had led the wrong outfit across that open space.

CHAPTER XXXVI

At six o'clock the next morning I saw the company runner stop at Lieutenant Deming's hole. Runners always meant movements of some sort, so I went over to find out what was on for the day.

The dope was that our artillery would lay down a box barrage in the woods which were directly in front of us. The barrage would begin at six-fifteen and end at six-thirty. We were to be moving forward at six-thirty and enter the woods at six-thirty-two. There would be no rolling barrage following the regular barrage.

The confidential stuff that the runner gave me was that a strong force of picked German machine-gunners had been concentrated at various places in the woods with positive orders to hold their positions at all costs. They were to stick to their posts in the face of their own barrage which was to shell the woods. This sacrifice was to be made in order that the rest of a German brigade consisting of several thousand men could make good their escape from the western section of Mont Blanc which they now occupied.

This information was brought to our lines by two Germans who gave themselves up early in the morning. They were a part of the detail that was to be sacrificed.

Promptly at six-fifteen our artillery opened up with one big bang. Before this time there was not a shell falling on either side. There was absolute silence. Now it was a positive din.

The woods were less than two hundred feet ahead. We sat in our trench on the side nearest our own artillery to protect ourselves against our own shells that were falling short.

At six-twenty-nine we were out of the trench and at six-thirty we were racing toward the woods. The barrage stopped as suddenly as it began. The dead silence that followed seemed unearthly. It seemed to lift something right out of me.

We entered the woods on a run and penetrated them to a depth of about ten feet. Then we stopped and almost staggered back out again!

There, lined up in the woods as close to the edge as they could get and still be concealed, was the whole German brigade, officers and all, standing in close-order formation like soldiers on parade. They surrendered to us in a body.

So startling was the effect on us that we simply stood and looked, with our mouths open. Had we been met with a hail of machine-gun bullets we should have stumbled on in some way, but to see a line of Germans dressed in their best soldier suits, wearing caps and cleaned shoes, was too much. We stopped.

The second wave now came crashing through the woods in back of us and almost ran us through with their bayonets. We had to move on to get out of their way. We passed down along the long line of Germans. They watched us going by — dirty and crumby-looking as we were, with a look on their faces as much as to say, 'All right, clean up the mess we made. We're going on a vacation.'

Somebody in back of me said, 'It looks as though the war was over now all right.'

And I said, 'Yes, for them it is.'

We pushed on through the woods, passing great piles of lumber, barbed wire, tools, narrow-gauge railroad tracks, ammunitions, some big guns, lots of smaller guns, and dugouts of all descriptions.

Reaching the western boundary of Mont Blanc, we swung to the north. Not another German was found. Not a shot had been fired.

And the fellows had all found their voices. It was the first time we had talked out loud in our natural voices since just before leaving Suippes.

We finally took up positions along a narrow-gauge railroad running near the northern summit of Mont Blanc. Here we fried bacon and boiled coffee. It was the first cooked food we had had in four days.

After the food came the sight-seeing parties. We were like a bunch of kids turned loose in an old attic full of junk. The Germans had built squatty houses among the trees with wooden sidewalks between them. We ransacked these houses and rooted in piles of rubbish that had been thrown out in back of them. We found piles of books and papers.

One type of book must have been very popular, as we found a lot of them. They were paper-covered booklets about eight by six inches with pictures of Indians, log cabins, and early American settlers on the covers. The Indians were shown trading with whites, offering furs in exchange for beads. The booklets may have been simply story-books, but some of the fellows

that could read German said that they were a form of propaganda showing the crude uncivilized conditions that existed in America.

The fellows were loading up on every form of junk they could find — tin whistles, old bayonets, helmets, papers, pipes, playing cards.

I asked some of them what they were going to do with the junk.

They said, 'Going to take them home as souvenirs . . . souvenirs of the war.'

CHAPTER XXXVII

LIEUTENANT DEMING and I were sitting in a concrete pit that had been used as a foundation for some big gun, perhaps a Big Bertha, when I noticed a detail of men moving through our line. Their clothes were too clean to belong to our outfit, so I climbed out of the pit and headed them off.

I said, 'What outfit are you fellows with?'

The sergeant in charge said, 'We're a salvage detail going forward to salvage the battle-field up ahead . . .'

'This is the front line right here. There hasn't been any battle fought up ahead of us.'

'Then where is all that German salvage stock that we heard about?'

'That's in back of you, mostly down in the deep dugouts.'

The salvage detail turned around and went back. There was no use salvaging a field before the battle was fought.

The place all around in through here had been used for four years as a German brigade headquarters, also a supply dump. Down in the deep dugouts were regular storerooms containing supplies of all kinds — small-arm ammunition, machine guns, rifles, revolvers and parts; also box after box of grenades, medical supplies, and clothing. A small railroad ran through one system of electric-lighted dugouts. An elevator was used to carry the cars to and from the surface. We had placed

guards around these dugouts to keep souvenir hunters out.

Early in the afternoon two French officers came riding up on horses. They had maps in their hands and were checking up to see how far we had advanced.

I was curious to know how far the French were behind us on the left so I moseyed over and asked them:

'Combien kilomets Français soldats in the rear?' pointing to the rear.

One of them answered, 'Twenty kilometers,' and sort of smiled.

Our left flank was open for that distance!

Then, when everything seemed nice and peaceful and we were beginning to make ourselves believe that maybe the war really was over, the damned German artillery had to open up. It seemed most ungrateful on their part. Here we had just let a couple of thousand of their men march away in their best clothes and they were now probably away back somewhere eating the food we should have had. And then another bunch has to turn around and try to blow us up! We couldn't help feeling that our good nature had been imposed upon. It made us mad — but ——

'All right, men. Stand by to move out . . .'

And it wasn't long before we were ducking across the road that runs between Suippes and Saint-Étienne-à-Arnes. After passing down a steep slope, we took up positions in a ravine through which a railroad ran.

We were now out in the open country. It seemed like a new world. The land behind us from Suippes to Mont

Blanc was one stretch of shell holes, broken barbed wire, trenches, dugouts, and dead men. Even the air was rotten. But out in this open country everything was fresh and the sun was shining.

We advanced from our ravine position up a slope leading to the north. About a hundred feet out, the Germans spotted us and opened up with a most terrific machine-gun and artillery fire. It simply swept the hill. I was about twenty-five feet in front of the platoon, as I wanted to reach the top of the hill before they did, but the fire was so hot that we just flopped and stayed down for a while.

I happened to lift my head and look toward the left. A shell landed about fifty feet away. It made a direct hit on a man. I couldn't draw my eyes away. I could pick out plainly the separate parts of his body in the air — the legs, the arms, the body . . . They seemed to go up in perfect order.

Again I felt the sick, sinking feeling I had had in the field before Bouresches. The situation now was practically the same: an open field with machine-gun bullets pecking up the ground and shells crashing all around and that body sailing in the air.

I was through. Down went my head into the dirt.

After some minutes my mind cleared a little and I was able to take in the situation around me. Over on my right about a hundred feet was a wood that began a short way down on the slope we were on and extended over the top of the hill.

I crawled toward it on my belly and motioned for the men in back of me to move in that direction also. A

tree is a great comfort even if it's a small one. We reached the woods and worked our way to the top of the hill. There was a short valley in front of us and a wooded hill on the other side of it in which were concealed the German machine guns.

We opened fire with our rifles and Chaut-Chauts. It's a great relief sometimes just to be able to fire your rifle. After a bit the machine-gun fire slackened down, and I saw the rest of the company crawling over the top of the hill and gradually working their way down into the valley toward the wooded hill. We entered the same woods and closed over to the left to connect up with the company. We found only two dismantled machine guns and one dead German. All the rest had beat it.

We now pushed to the end of those woods, but met with no further interference. It was getting dark and orders were passed to dig in.

Lieutenant Deming and I dug in together. The hole we dug was short, and we had to keep our legs bent up or else stick them out over the end of the hole. Shells were bursting around. I kept my legs out and so did Deming.

Each time a shell would explode, the lieutenant would say, 'How far away did that hit?'

I would say, 'Two or three hundred feet away.'

This happened several times, and I had just got through saying 'Three hundred feet away,' when a big piece of shrapnel went *schllllll* — over our hole, landing with a plunk about a foot away.

Deming pulled in his legs quick and said, real mad, 'Hell, you don't know a damned thing about them!'

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THAT same night Sergeant Franks, the one I had that little run-in with back in the trench, came over to my hole and asked me if he could take his brother, who was a corporal in our company, somewhere back to the rear, as he was sick.

I told him nothing doing; that neither he nor his brother could be relieved. We were short of men and another attack was to be made in the morning. Deming was there with me, but he did not say anything.

Early the next morning Sergeant Franks came slowly toward my hole. I was alone. His brother, the corporal, was holding him and helping him along. As he came closer, Franks held out his hand, saying,

'Look, I sure got a mean one.'

I said, 'What is it?'

He said, 'See where that piece of shrapnel hit me on the back of the hand?'

There was a small red cut all right. I said, 'When did that happen?'

He said, 'Just a few minutes ago.'

'But there haven't been any shells bursting around here this morning.'

'Oh, yes, there have. A piece came flying through the air and struck my hand, didn't it, George?' — turning to his brother. Of course, George said yes. I felt that he had cut himself in some way, but I told him to go back if he wanted to.

Then his brother said, 'Can I take him back!'

'Certainly not. There is no reason for anybody going back with him.'

Franks said: 'But we promised our mother that we would both stay together during the war. Won't it be all right if my brother goes back with me and after my hand is dressed we can both come back?'

'Nothing doing! Let your brother bandage up your hand right here and both of you stay.'

They left and went back toward their hole. Later in the morning I checked over the platoon to see how many men were left. Both the sergeant and his brother were missing. I guess they kept their promise to their mother all right.

CHAPTER XXXIX

At seven o'clock that morning we started forward. Before us lay a hilly country broken up with small patches of woods. Back of us was an outfit with one-pounders and Stokes mortars. They were to furnish the barrage for us that morning. The regular artillery had not yet swung into line. I did not mind the one-pounders so much, but I did not like the idea of advancing under the Stokes mortars. They are a mean weapon and make lots of noise, but it always seemed to me that they were fired by-guess-and-by-God.

The Fourth Platoon was on the extreme right and because of the land formation and clumps of trees we kept a very irregular line. One minute the line would jam up on the right and that would push us away over. Then there would be a big interval on the left and we would have to close over with a rush.

I didn't notice the German fire so much this morning, but that was because of the trouble we were having trying to keep a line. You can't be worrying about two things at once. Besides, I could see those Stokes mortar bombs, or whatever they are called, hitting out in front of us, and I kept wondering where the next one was going to hit.

After advancing about two kilometers we got to a good-sized wood. There was nothing for us on the right flank to do but enter it. The rest of the company on the left were still advancing in open country and

naturally one can advance much more quickly in the open than through woods. This kept us hopping around in the woods in order to keep up, especially when we came to spots covered with heavy underbrush. I was the last man on the right of our platoon, and I kept hollering, 'Keep in contact with the outfit on the left . . . Guide left.'

I did not want to wander off from the company again. It seemed to me our platoon was always on some flank. On advances of this kind we never knew where we were going — at least, I never did; and if I asked a lieutenant, he never knew either. It was simply a case of going on and on until you came in contact with the Germans, which we always did.

Finally we came to a barbed-wire entanglement among the trees. It stretched out to the left and to the right. We did not have anything to cut the wire with, so it was a case of picking your way through. I got through all right and so did three or four other fellows.

All of a sudden shells began dropping around us. We knew in a second that they were from our own artillery. They were coming in thick. It was plain that we had advanced too far. Nothing ever confused us more than to find our own shells hopping in on us.

There was a mad rush to get back through the barbed wire. I tripped and fell before reaching the wire. The fall probably saved my life because just as I hit the ground I heard a stream of machine-gun bullets pass over me and go *plunk!* in the mud a few feet away.

I lay there bewildered for a few minutes. Then I looked around. I was alone. Several of our shells fell

close and the mud they threw up fell on me. I started to get up. *Crack! — crack!* the machine-gun bullets went, right over me, and they were from a machine gun close at hand.

The ground along the side of the wire entanglement had been cleared away of trees and bushes leaving an open space about twenty feet wide. The machine-gunner had this space under observation and I was in his direct line of fire. As long as I lay flat he couldn't hit me. In fact he didn't shoot at me. Perhaps he thought I was dead. At that, I was more dead than alive. I sweated blood if anybody ever did. This was an entirely new situation for me. I felt that it was a time that called for real prayer if any time did. I tried to pull myself up on my knees, but *crack! — crack!* — and down I went. I tried to pray to myself, but it seemed that I was bursting inside and that I must give vent to my feelings in a loud voice. I was desperate. I must pray out loud. So I started — 'O God ——' My voice to be in keeping with my feelings should have thundered forth these words, but instead of that the weakest little sound came from me. I grew hot. I think I blushed. I know I was embarrassed. I stole a look around at the German lines to see if anybody had heard me. They could have shot at me and I could have stood it, but if they had laughed I believe I would have torn after them.

After my fit of stage fright, I felt a whole lot better. All the tenseness was gone and I was myself again.

The wire was about ten feet away. I made a spring and a run, but tripped and fell flat. I couldn't figure out

why I should fall that way, but on looking down at my right foot I found that one of my wrapped leggings had become unwrapped and was dragging behind. The machine gun was playing in my direction, so I couldn't sit up and fix it. I crawled closer to the wire and then pulled up my leg and unwrapped the rest of the legging and let it go. It was all caked up with yellow mud anyway.

I crept on through the wire, and then I saw some fellows from the company who had been in the second wave. They were partly lost and were hitting it over toward the left. I tried to question them, but they were beyond words. Feet were in full possession. The only thing I could get out of them was, 'We're in our own barrage!'

So I beat it over to the left myself until I came to the edge of the woods. The woods came to a sort of a point, and at this point there was an old-time German machine-gun replacement. It was built in a rather peculiar manner. First there was a good-sized hole and in its southwest corner there was an entrance to a fairly deep dugout. A short, narrow trench, not over four feet long, led from the first hole to a much shallower second hole.

There were quite a number of fellows in the first hole and none in the second, so I jumped down into this second hole. Soon an officer came in, and then more men, so after a while we had quite a houseful.

Shells were falling around and we knew they were coming from our own batteries. They dropped so fast around us that it seemed as if they were shot from a

machine gun. The bunch in the hole were hugging the southern bank — that was the side nearest our batteries. Whoever was doing the firing had this particular hole spotted and he was not sparing with his ammunition.

The officer in the hole said to the runner he had with him, who was also a bugler, 'Have you that Véry pistol?'

The runner pulled the pistol out and offered it to the officer, but the officer said, 'No, you keep it and fire up a shell to tell them to lengthen their range.'

The runner asked, 'What color?'

The officer said, 'I don't know . . . white, I think . . . shoot a white one.'

The runner looked in his pack. 'I've only got a red one and a green. The red is for a heavy barrage and the green one for gas.'

'Shoot the green. They'll know something is wrong, and perhaps they'll send somebody out to investigate. It's that damned one-pounder outfit. They never did know anything . . .'

The runner shot up the green light and in a few minutes the shelling ceased.

A short time afterwards a fellow appeared at the top of the hole. The officer spoke up: 'What the hell are you fellows trying to do back there — blow us up?'

The new fellow said: 'We didn't know you were in this hole . . . According to the dope we got, the line should be one hundred yards back. Do you know where the present line is?' He must have been the observer for the one-pounder outfit.

The officer, his runner, and the new man left. I didn't know any of them.

A little later, when things were settled down, all the fellows in the hole except one pulled out for some other place. I guess they didn't like the looks of the hole. It was too shallow. Besides, somebody must have got hit in it recently, as there were a number of big spots of blood at the bottom.

There was a legging lying over in a corner and I remembered that I was short a legging, so I put it on. It was a shaped legging, which led me to think it belonged to an officer. He must have been wounded, as the legging had blood on it.

I was still short a platoon, so I started scouting around to see if I could find any of the men. In the deep hole next to me, I found five men belonging to my platoon. Farther over on the right, I located four more, and in a hole a short way to the left there were six more. That was all I could find.

About fifty feet back of me I discovered the hole where the captain, Lieutenant Deming, and another lieutenant were hanging out, so things did not look so bad after all. I did not ask them if there was anything they wanted done, for fear they might think of something.

As soon as I knew where most of the platoon was, I went back to my hole, broke out the short shovel, and started to trim up my new home. The fellow that had been in the hole had left before I got back, so I was now the sole owner.

The hole had been dug by Germans, and naturally

they were interested in protecting themselves from fire that came from the south. The southern bank of the hole was well built up with the mud that had been removed from the hole, whereas the northern bank was bare. I cleaned the hole out thoroughly and scooped out a good-sized hole under the northern bank. All of my mud was thrown up on the bank nearest Germany.

Along in the afternoon the Germans began to shell us and they laid them down thick and fast. They knew the exact range of these holes and were placing their hits mighty close, as they figured we were in them.

I heard a shell hit fairly close in back of me and looking over the side of my hole I saw men lifting the captain out of his hole. He had been hit, but I couldn't see where. It must have been around the head or shoulders because he could stand when supported, with the help of Lieutenant Deming, who was on his right and the other lieutenant on his left. I noticed the captain's left arm was over the lieutenant's shoulder. They walked slowly down the hill to the rear.

I hollered to Deming. He turned around and said that he was going back with the captain and that I was in charge.

I watched the three of them disappear from sight and a feeling of loneliness came over me. I never bothered much with officers either at the front or behind the lines, but I always liked to know they were around. Whether some of them knew anything or not I don't know, but we gave them credit for knowing more than we did about the war. We knew that we

didn't know anything about it. Besides, they were handy to have around. In case anything went wrong, we had somebody to hang the blame on, and somebody to curse out.

CHAPTER XL

It was getting late, and I knew it was necessary to find out what troops were on our right and left, so as soon as the Germans let up on their shelling, I took two fellows and we skirted along the woods to the left which extended down toward the road running between Suippes and Saint-Étienne. I found parts of our company dug in along the woods — just enough to say we had a line. On the right of the hole I was in, we could not locate any troops, so we established a lookout to protect this flank.

Early the next morning a runner from our company came up with a request for a report on how many of our men were holding the line. I took a couple of fellows and we went along the woods and made a check-up. I counted seventy-eight men. This included the men that were in holes around my hole. I also discovered that Lieutenant Kelton, of the Second Platoon, was in the deep dugout right next to me. I turned my report over to him and he sent it back to the company.

Our Company Headquarters, I learned, and the galley with Nagel, were now back in the neighborhood of Mont Blanc. So was the Third Battalion Headquarters. Major Shaw was now in charge of the Third Battalion. The Germans shelled our positions all day long and we stuck close to our holes. Coming on toward dusk I saw a chow detail of four men come struggling up the hill with two containers of chow.

One of the meanest jobs I know of is carrying chow.

The containers are heavy and awkward to carry. The handles are mean and cut your hands. Besides that, it was always customary to curse out the chow detail — either the food was no good or there was not enough of it. We would call them all kinds of dog-robbers, accuse them of eating the food on the way, or of selling part of it to some other outfit.

This chow detail had traveled over two miles to reach us, across a very rough country that was under continuous shell fire. When they put the containers down above my hole, they were all in.

I was the only sergeant around, so it fell to me to make distribution of the chow. It did not take long for the bunch to gang around with open mess kits and cups. I appointed Fred and Gray to dish out the chow, and it was real good stuff — bread, red beans, and coffee. Nagel always gave us the best he had when we were on the line.

As soon as the fellows around the hole were fed, I looked around for a detail to carry the food over to the rest of the company that was dug in along the woods on the left. Fred and Gray agreed to go, but I needed one more. There was a fellow sitting to one side eating, so I went over to him and said, 'You go with these other two fellows when you get through eating and help distribute chow.'

He did not let on that he heard me, so I toed him with my shoe. It was almost dark by this time. I said, 'Did you hear me?'

He said, 'Yes, but I got a bum leg ligament and I can't walk very well.'

I bent over to get a good look at him. It was Gunnery Sergeant Robinson, the man who should really have been in charge of my platoon. This was the first time I had seen him since we left Suippes.

Robinson was supposed to be one of those real hard-boiled Marine sergeants right from Haiti. Back at Suippes he was put in charge of the platoon. He would get the fellows out in the field and pull the old boot-camp drill sergeant's special of making the men stand on one leg and stick the other one out in front. Then he would strut down in front of them, yelling: 'Hold it that way until I tell you to put it down . . . Straighten it up more! . . . Worse than a bunch of old men! . . . I don't see how in hell they let a bunch of cripples like you in the Marine Corps.'

He raised particular hell all the time. The only way I got out of drilling under him was by posing around as an embryo officer. Captain McElroy told me at Suippes that I had a commission coming, but until it came, I would have to go along with the platoon in the regular manner. That meant drill. But when Robinson started to pull the boot-camp stuff, I was through. I stretched out what McElroy told me and made believe that my commission was there and that I was simply waiting for the tailor in Paris to finish my uniform.

Most of the old-time sergeants were scared of officers. They had all been fed on that 'Please, Mr. Captain,' and 'Will Lieutenant Stiff permit a sergeant to talk to him?' stuff, but when it came to the new noncoms, both corporals and sergeants, how the old-timers would ride us! We were worse than scum!

So by posing around like an officer, I got by without having to drill under Robinson.

John Bowen from Mexico, Missouri, one of the original Ninety-Seventh Company's bunch, called me down one day. He said, 'You look like a pouter pigeon, going around like that with your chest stuck out.'

I said, 'If sticking out my chest will keep me from sticking out my foot, I'm going to keep the chest out.'

Bowen was a private, and I suppose if I had really been an officer he wouldn't have hesitated one minute to tell me what I looked like. We were both raised — militarily speaking — on Parris Island, South Carolina, and to him I would always be just a guy from the company. Try to be military with him or any of the fellows I was 'raised' with and it was, 'Just because you got a couple of stripes on your arm you think you are somebody'; or, 'If you didn't have those stripes on your arm . . .' They would never finish the last and I could supply whatever words or meaning I wanted to.

Anyway, on this night, Sergeant Robinson had the appearance and behavior of a very sick kitten with a bum paw. A few nights on the battle-field and the hardness was all gone. I did not let on I recognized him and later on he limped back to the rear. I got Reed to go along with the other fellows to distribute chow.

One of the men on Nagel's chow detail called me aside and said: 'Here is some stuff that Nagel sent up to you. He said you would know how to distribute it.'

He then slipped me a full cut of Horseshoe chewing tobacco, four packages of Lucky Strike cigarettes, and

six packages of Bull Durham. We were all out of tobacco of every description and this was a life-saver.

The chow this night was the first real hot food we had had since we left the neighborhood of Suippes, six days before.

Twice that night I led patrols of five men out on our right flank to a distance of four or five hundred yards. The second time out, we were moving along the edge of a wood with a wide open space on our left. Suddenly one of the men said, 'I saw somebody moving out in that open place.'

We stopped. There were a number of dark forms lying out there. We had crossed this space the day before.

I said, 'We had better go and look . . . It might be a wounded man.'

It was a clear night and we could see for quite a distance. We had just got out of the shadows of the trees when a man arose about a hundred feet ahead of us and started running toward the opposite woods on the north.

I shouted, 'Halt!'

He continued to run. I pulled out my automatic. The men raised their rifles to their shoulders.

I said, 'Wait, but keep him covered . . .'

Again I shouted, 'Halt!' — and fired over his head. He kept on going.

For the third time I shouted, 'Halt!' and when he didn't stop I gave the command, 'Fire!'

The men fired and the fleeing man dropped. We crossed the field to where he was lying.

We had killed an American soldier.

One of the fellows said, worried, 'What the hell shall we do now?'

I said, 'Nothing . . . he should have halted . . .'

I stooped down to examine the man. I noticed a shining object in his right hand. It was a watch. I felt the pockets of his blouse. I could feel another watch, also a bunch of paper. Reaching in, I drew some of it out and saw that it was French money.

Then I said to the men, 'Come on, I'll show you something . . .'

I led the way back to the place where we first saw this man get up. There were a number of our dead lying there. They were on their backs, their blouses were opened, and the pockets of their breeches were turned inside out.

'Robbing the dead!'

CHAPTER XLI

THERE was something doing the next morning all right. Our artillery began to hit it up for fare-thee-well. They laid down one awful barrage. No orders had come for us to advance, so we just stood by expecting a counter-attack or something.

Then along came Shorty Carter, our company runner, and dropped into my hole. He had been running and had just breath enough left to say:

'Have our men stand fast . . . Another outfit is going through us . . .'

Runners were sent down the line at once notifying our men not to advance. Not that there was much danger of their doing anything like that without orders!

About this time, toward the south, I could see a line of men advancing through the long valley that we had crossed a few days ago. First they would run, then flop, run — flop. It did not look right to me to see them flopping around that way so far back of the line. Usually an attacking outfit marches up at night and occupies the front line along with the outfit that is then holding the line. Then when the barrage starts in the morning, the new outfit is ready to go. You have to stick close to your barrage to get any benefit out of it.

This outfit now advancing was still a good half-mile away from our position. They must have thought the Germans were right in front of them the way they kept flopping.

About eight o'clock they reached our line, and then they did flop! Whatever the set objective was is a question, but right here was their objective as far as they were concerned. They started ganging up in my hole. I wanted to be polite, so I didn't say anything for a while. Besides, they did look rather tired. But their barrage was still going on, so finally I said:

'You fellows had better get going . . . Your barrage will get so far ahead of you that it won't do you any good.'

But still they sat. Barrages were not worrying them in the least. What they wanted was a place to rest.

Then I asked, 'What outfit are you fellows with?'

None of them answered. Then I remembered that instructions had been issued not to give your organization name to strangers, so I shut up. From the looks of their clothes and equipment I could see that they were a brand-new outfit. I noticed also that they had the latest Browning automatic rifles, with the regular belts for carrying the ammunition magazines. It was a dandy rifle. I had used one of them back at the grenade school. They were light and quick-firing — not heavy and slow and jerky like the French Chaut-Chauts that we were using. I had heard our captain saying some while back that he wished our outfit had the new Browning instead of the old Chaut-Chauts. One of the new men in my hole still had the canvas cover over the barrel portion of his rifle. I told him he'd better take the cover off before he went into action, but he didn't pay any attention to me.

There they sat. They did not talk to each other and

they would not talk to me. Our barrage had stopped and there were a few German shells falling. I knew it would not do to have a gang like this in one hole, so I finally said: 'You fellows will have to get out and dig your own holes if you're going to stay here — either go in the woods or pick out a spot lower down on the hill.'

One by one they left and soon I could hear them shoveling away. Rather a queer bunch, I thought. I could not figure them out.

After a while a captain belonging to the same outfit came into the hole. He seemed a little fussed up, so I kept quiet.

After a few minutes he said, 'What organization is holding the line?'

'Sixth Marines.'

'They must have Marines all along the front . . . How many are over here, anyhow?'

'Two regiments . . . The Fifth and Sixth.'

'That's funny . . . Every place I hear about, the Marines seem to be there.'

'They keep shoving us around all the time.'

'What does your captain do when the men make an attack?'

'He goes right with us.'

The captain looked kind of worried then, and a few minutes later he climbed out of the hole.

It was not long before a corporal dropped in, and after a bit we got to chewing the rag.

I said, 'What outfit are you fellows with?'

'Thirty-Sixth Division.'

I said, 'That sounds like a National Guard outfit.'

'It is.'

'What part of the States are you from?'

'Oklahoma and Texas.'

'There was an odd bunch of fellows in here a few minutes ago. I couldn't get them to talk. I wonder who they were.'

'Maybe they were Indians.'

'Indians!'

'Yes . . . we got a whole bunch of full-blooded Indians with us.'

'They ought to make pretty good fighters. They look husky enough. Have you been on the line before?'

'No, this is our first time up.'

'How long have you been in France?'

'About four months.'

Then he told me about their trip up to the front. They had got off the train quite a way back the night before; then made a forced march across the old battle-field we had fought over, came up to Mont Blanc, and then were to go right on in to the attack this morning. He claimed they did not stop for food or water.

I said, 'They broke your outfit in rather rough.'

'It seems rough to us . . . How do you fellows get by in your attacks?'

'We don't . . . Most of the fellows get killed or wounded. On that stretch of ground you hiked over we lost a hundred and seventy-odd men in three days' fighting out of our company alone . . .'

'For Christ's sake! . . . How many men you got left?'

'Last night we had seventy-eight.'

This news did not cheer him up very much, so he left.

The Thirty-Sixth Division rested that day and night.

The next morning the artillery sent over another barrage. The Thirty-Sixth Division was supposed to advance. They did not make a move. I did not see an officer or a non-com around. They were all Indians dug in around my hole. Not one of them got out.

We had the Thirty-Sixth Division with us the second day.

Shortly after dark I heard Custer in the next hole holler, 'Hey, bring back that canteen!'

I called out, 'What's the matter over there?'

'One of them damned Indians stole my canteen of water.'

'How do you know it was an Indian?'

'Don't you suppose I know what an Indian looks like? He was stooping down above the hole and I thought he was coming in. Then he picked up the canteen and beat it.'

'Why the hell didn't you shoot him?'

'By God, I will shoot the next one that comes sneaking around.'

Water was one of the hardest things to get. The empty canteens were sent to my hole. Then, with the chow detail I would send them back one night and the detail that carried up the chow the next night would bring them back full. Sometimes they wouldn't bring them back. All of our fellows carried two canteens. That was one of the first things I always told new men getting ready to go into the line, 'Get an extra canteen.' It seemed to me the Indians were learning fast.

A few of them got into our chow line the first night, and I didn't say anything. The next night there were a few more in the line, but they were out of luck. They were told to go and eat with their own outfit. Reed, the strong man of our company, was detailed to keep the Indians out, and he did.

Early the next morning a runner brought orders that part of our line was to advance a short distance with the Thirty-Sixth Division men. This was to get them started, because up to this time, when their barrage started, they wouldn't see us making any move to advance, so they wouldn't make any move either.

The artillery laid down a half-hour barrage, followed by a rolling barrage. Ten of us from around my hole were all set to go. I went around to the Indians' holes at our side and rear and motioned for them to come on, and they came. All they needed was somebody to show them what to do.

We got all the Indians we could find over to the edge of the woods. Our artillery was still hitting it up. Then the rolling barrage started at six-thirty and we went forward. There was more or less confusion, as part of the men were advancing in the open and part in the woods. There was an open space in front of us a good two hundred yards wide, and beyond that was another wood. It was a rolling country very similar to that which lay behind us.

I told my men that we would advance as far as the next wood and then stop and return to our original holes.

Our barrage was falling in these woods, so I figured

that it must be the first objective. It is customary to close on the first objective as quickly as possible.

We kept up a steady run toward these woods. The Indians were running and flopping, so we got ahead of them, but they kept on coming. We reached the woods in a very short time and went a short distance into the woods, but there weren't any Germans there. The Germans had a counter-barrage working, also machine guns, but this was now falling in back of us.

I told my men to go back, one by one. The Indians didn't quite get this, especially when I pointed the other way and told them to keep going until they found the Germans.

After a while I left, and when I finally got back and jumped into my hole I was sure glad that we'd got rid of those Indians at last.

It wasn't long until Fred, in the next hole, who was on the lookout, called out to me: 'Sergeant, here come those damned Indians back again.'

I jumped up, and sure enough there they were coming through the woods toward us. I shouted and waved my arms at them to go back, but they came right on and crept back into their holes. They must have figured that the white man's way is the best.

I felt sorry for them at that. The poor devils had such a dragged out please-take-me-home look. Still and all I was getting fed up on those Indians. The more they hung around our line the more shelling we got. The German counter barrage always fell in on us. Besides that, I missed a whole slab of chewing tobacco the night before.

CHAPTER XLII

THAT night Nagel sent us up a batch of doughnuts in addition to the regular chow. They were given to me on the side, as there were not enough to go around. I got Fred, who had been handling the chow with Gray, and told him to take the doughnuts over to the bunch who were dug in in the woods instead of giving them to the fellows that were dug in right around my hole, because these fellows near by had been getting first crack at the chow every night, as they could see when the chow detail came up. So I thought the other bunch rated the doughnuts.

They were fine doughnuts. I heard that some of the fellows actually cried when they stuck their teeth in them.

The artillery sent over another barrage the next morning, but again the Thirty-Sixth Division did not advance. They simply stayed in their holes. We were hoping they would either move ahead or else get off the line altogether. Our artillery was only wasting ammunition on them and the Thirty-Sixth Division was drawing fire from the Germans onto us. Besides, the first thing we knew the Germans would get to thinking they had a weak outfit ahead of them and pull off a counter-attack. Then we would get more hell. The Germans would only counter-attack some outfit they thought they could lick.

Later on that morning, Top Sergeant James came

up from the rear. Usually the Top Kicker stays back with the office records and looks after things in general.

He sat down in the narrow communication trench that ran from my hole into the next one and sat facing me with his feet in my hole.

James said, 'I've got some good news . . . The Germans are asking for peace.'

I said, 'Where did you get that dope?'

'I picked up a paper that was dropped from a German plane. It is printed in English and addressed to the American soldier. It says the Germans are willing to accept Wilson's terms of peace, that the German people want to be friends with the Americans, and that the French and English have been making dupes out of us . . .'

'The way the Germans have been dropping shells around here for the last few days you would think they were trying to make pieces out of us.'

James said, 'I'd be willing to bet that this will be our last battle.'

'That will be all right with me.'

I took a chew of tobacco and offered James one, but he said: 'Not here. How do you manage to chew up here on the line? . . . What would you do if there was a sudden gas attack?'

I said: 'I'd keep the chew and put my mask on. Then the first chance I got I'd lift the cloth part of the mask, slip the rubber out of my mouth, and spit. The clips would stay on my nose and I would not breathe in. Lots of times I just put the clips on my nose and the rubber in my mouth and let the cloth and eye-pieces

hang. Of course, I'm an experienced chewer and I can hold a chew without saliva forming to any great degree. Some fellows let the juice run down the sides of their mouth and can't properly spit over their lower lip. Some hit their chin. But I handle my tobacco as a gentleman should. I can drink from a canteen or cup with a chew in my mouth and not mix them up. It's all in the knack of holding it in your mouth. I've been in many a gas-filled area without a mask on and with only a chew in my face, and it seemed to me the tobacco absorbed the gas. Of course, I know it doesn't, but it gave me a certain feeling of security and that's all I needed. A chew also relieves throat dryness from high explosive gas.'

'Well, I wouldn't want to take a chance on it myself. I don't like gas. I guess I'd better wait until I get back to take a chew.'

'It's all right if you don't get excited and let the spit run down the rubber tube into the canister or swallow the chew. But you'd better practice up on it a while before you try it out in real gas.'

'I guess I will . . . Say, how do you like my German souvenir?'

He showed me a very handsome German dress knife and scabbard with fancy colored ribbons on it.

'It's fine,' I said, 'but no souvenirs for me . . . I'm scared of them . . .'

'What do you mean — scared of them?'

'Nothing much, except that I don't think they're lucky. . . . It always seems to me that the fellows with souvenirs are the fellows that get hit . . .'

'Oh, you're just superstitious . . .'

'Maybe I am. . . . By the way, how soon are we going to get relieved from here?'

'Just as soon as the Thirty-Sixth Division advances and establishes a line they can hold . . . I understand they pulled all their officers in on the carpet and raised hell with them . . .'

Right then there was a blinding flash and a roar. Everything got dark. I seemed to be going around and around. How long I was in that stunned state I don't know. Perhaps not more than a minute, because when I came to, the air in the hole was in motion like a whirlwind. It was black and thick with smoke and dust. I was lying at the bottom of the hole. My throat and lungs burned with the sharp fumes of picric acid. I slipped on my gas mask, and lay there waiting. I didn't know whether I was hit or not. I felt numb.

Then I heard a voice and somebody jumped into the hole. I turned my head. It was Engle, our company barber. He said, 'I'm hit.'

I got up and I was still dopey. I didn't have a thing around the hole to use for a bandage and he didn't have a first-aid kit.

'There's a first-aid station about a hundred yards down on our left,' I said, 'you'd better beat it down there.'

I helped Engle out of the hole.

Then came Burns. He was wounded and I told him to go to the first-aid station too. Then came Custer, a fellow from Chicago. He was hit bad. There were in all five fellows in the hole next to me that were hit, all

wounded around the shoulders and arms. The shell had exploded directly over the hole.

I now turned to James. He was lying back in the communicating trench on his back, his feet still in my hole. The German dagger was still across his knees, or rather what had been his lap. A piece of shrapnel had ploughed through his helmet and head. He was dead.

They were still shelling the hole, so I crawled out. I found another hole down to my left and I got into it and just lay there looking up at the sky. It was a clear day.

Soon a runner came up and said the Germans were attacking and that we had to hold the line even if the Thirty-Sixth Division fell back.

I got out of the hole and gathered up all the men I could find and we rushed over to the outer edge of the woods.

That part of the Thirty-Sixth Division that had remained up ahead was dropping back. The woods on the left made a dip toward our line and we could see Germans coming out of that section. There were Thirty-Sixth Division men between us and the Germans, so we held our fire.

Both the Germans and most of the Thirty-Sixth Division men were driven back by Marine Sergeant Dan Daly's machine-gunners, who were on the extreme left flank of our line. First he broke up the German counter-attack and then he fired over the heads of the Thirty-Sixth Division men until they went back to their positions.

We didn't do anything but just look on.

After I got back to my hole I got a couple of fellows and we lifted Sergeant James's body out of the small trench and placed it over to one side. We were not allowed to bury men at that time as a regular detail took care of that.

Somebody asked me if it was all right to search James, as he was supposed to have money and a watch. Lieutenant Kelton gave his permission and I said all right, but be sure to turn the stuff in to the company so that his folks would get it. (We didn't like to leave our men to be searched by the salvage detail, as we heard that they only turned in what they did not want themselves. You could buy things off them and they were wholesalers in souvenirs.)

I was still straightening up around my hole after we took James out when Gray, in the next hole, stuck his head over the communicating trench and said, 'Fred wants to see you, Sergeant.'

I said, 'What the hell does he want to see me about? Let him come over here.'

Gray: 'He can't come over . . . He said he just wants to say good-bye to you . . .'

Gray's voice sounded rather funny, but still I did not get the idea why a private should call me, a sergeant, over to see him. But I crawled through the short trench and there was poor Fred lying at the bottom of the hole all bandaged up. He kind of apologized for asking me to come over, and I felt bad because I knew he must have heard what I said. I got down into the hole.

Fred said, 'I just wanted to shake hands with you and say good-bye before they take me away . . .'

I bent over and shook hands. He had been hit with the same shell that killed James. Lieutenant Kelton had bandaged him up.

I said: 'I'm sorry to see you go, Fred. You and Gray have been doing most of the dirty work around here . . . You've been a big help . . .'

Fred: 'I'm sorry I've got to go . . .'

Fred was one of our new fellows and he was always willing to do anything or go anywhere. He was just a boy.

Two German prisoners came up then with a stretcher. One man was guarding them. I told them to come down into the hole, and pointed to Fred. Together we got him onto the stretcher. When one of the Germans was reaching down to pick up the stretcher, he saw a box of hardtack lying down near his foot. He looked at the hardtack and then he looked at me. I nodded my head, yes, and he grabbed up the box and stuck it inside his blouse. Then he looked at me again. No words were spoken.

We lifted the stretcher out of the hole and I shook hands with Fred again.

'So long, Sergeant.'

'So long, Fred.'

As I stood there watching them carrying Fred away, my eyes began to burn and my nose twitched. I guess I cried.

CHAPTER XLIII

Joe Getty, one of the originals of the First Platoon, came into my hole. Joe had been acting as a stretcher-bearer and was located down near the first-aid station.

Joe and I did not hook up very well. Joe, together with Bill Lamar and Johnny Aspinwall, used to furnish most of the music and songs for the bunch, especially when we were back at Tours. (It was only the First Platoon that was at Tours.)

As I said, Joe and I did not get along somehow. In fact, he told me once that he did not like my looks. Of course, I could not help that.

Anyway, after leaving Tours, we reached the old trenches near Verdun, southeast of Verdun in the town of Haudemont through which the old trenches ran. We were having chow one day in this town and I said something to Getty in a joking way, but he wouldn't joke. We wise-cracked each other back and forth for a while, and finally Joe said, 'If you didn't have those corporal stripes on . . .'

I said, 'The stripes never bother me.'

Nothing more was said and I did not really take it as an insult because I was used to Joe. We started in arguing on Parris Island the first day we landed, when we still had our civilian clothes on, and we had been arguing ever since.

Sergeant McFadden, the fellow who was killed at Soissons, took my trouble with Getty sort of person-

ally. He was in the Marines before the war and he took his stripes very seriously. He didn't say anything to me, but he went to McElroy and told him that my action in letting Getty talk to me that way was hurting the other non-commissioned officers in the eyes of the privates and that I was not fit to be a non-com. McElroy told him that he did not see any great offense and that he thought it best to let me handle my own affairs. That made McFadden sore, and he wouldn't talk to me any more. In fact he said he was going to get me himself some day.

But I couldn't see the idea of personal fights. I had seen fellows crippled in personal fights. I'd seen men go to the sick bay and never come back.

Joe Getty chewed tobacco, and like Jack Wilmarth he would run short, but he would go without it rather than bum from me.

On this day in the hole below Mont Blanc, Joe had a weary look on his face. He had just seen three of the old-timers from our company pass through the first-aid station. Custer had died before they got very far with him.

Getty said, 'The old bunch is getting pretty low.'

'Yes — pretty low. I guess Bendow, you, and I are about the only ones left of the old First Platoon. Dale was here a few days ago, but I don't see him around any more.'

We sat without saying anything for quite a while. Then Joe got up, saying, 'I guess I'd better get back to the station.'

'Got any chewing, Joe?'

'No, I haven't had a chew for a long time.'

'Wait a minute and I'll cut you off a chunk . . . They sent me up a big plug last night . . .'

I gave him the tobacco and he thanked me. He started to climb out, then stopped and turned around again, kind of embarrassed, and said, 'I'm sorry for what I said up in the old trenches that day, Nap . . .' Then he climbed out, quick.

CHAPTER XLIV

THAT afternoon a runner came up from Battalion Headquarters with a message for the officer in charge. I sent him on to Lieutenant Kelton, but pretty soon he brought the message back to me with a request to notify the men. The message was not long, but it said enough. As I remember, it ran like this:

> Have the men in your command return all equipment that belongs to the Thirty-Sixth Division back to the members of the Thirty-Sixth Division, . . . especially the Browning automatic rifles. No relief of this battalion will be made until all Browning automatic rifles are accounted for.

Kelton perhaps did not know what it was all about, but I had my suspicions. I went down along the line and told the fellows plainly that if they had a Browning tucked away anywhere, or knew where one was, to get it and give it back to the Indians and to make sure that the Indians knew they had it. I added that a search was to be made and any of our men found with a Browning would be 'run up for a shoot'; also that there was no chance for a relief until the Indians got their Brownings back.

Then I hurried back to my hole and quietly pushed aside an old piece of German blanket and gently lifted up a brand-new Browning and a bunch of magazines for it. The first day the Indians ganged up in my hole, one of them forgot his Browning when he was getting out. I carefully hung the piece of blanket over it, so it

wouldn't get dirty and hoped that the man who owned it would not come hunting for it. It had one magazine in it. I took it with me when the Germans pulled off their counter-attack, but I didn't get a chance to use it.

One of the Indians had a hole right in back of mine. I asked him, 'Did you have a Browning?' And held it up so he could see what I was talking about.

He nodded his head, yes.

I said, 'Where is it?'

He humped his shoulders as much as to say, 'I don't know and don't give a damn.'

'You take this one and go and tell your captain you've got it.'

Later on I went back along our line. Every so often some one of the fellows would pipe up with 'That Indian got a Browning,' or, 'There's a Browning.'

Altogether our company turned back about twenty-five Brownings and there were no questions asked.

CHAPTER XLV

The next morning the artillery was busy again. I saw the Indians getting out of their holes and hitting it off through the woods toward Germany, and I hoped they wouldn't come back.

The Germans threw their barrage in on top of our line again, killing two more of our men — both new men who had joined us at Suippes.

On toward evening word came up from Battalion Headquarters that a bunch of French refugees would pass through our lines. They had been released by Germans and were traveling from Saint-Étienne to Suippes. We had orders to be on the lookout for them and not to shoot them up.

About dark, Reed, Doran, and I were coming back from a short patrol. We saw a gang coming down the road that led out of Saint-Étienne and we waited for them to come up. They were the refugees — women, children, and old men — about sixty of them. They were carrying very little stuff.

We tried to talk to some of them, but they didn't seem very talkative. I don't suppose they knew who we were. They had been with the Germans for four years. A tall, elderly Frenchman was in charge. He seemed to know the route and where he was headed for.

We walked ahead of them down the road toward Mont Blanc until we met another patrol traveling our way. We both halted until we identified each other.

They had orders to be on the lookout for refugees also. The new patrol turned around and escorted the refugees on toward Mont Blanc. We went back to our holes.

Lieutenant Mansfield, of the Battalion Scouts, came into my hole later on. He had just been down to the town of Saint-Étienne which lay over on our left front. The Germans were supposed to have evacuated it after the refugees left and Mansfield went down to see.

He was walking down the main street of the town when the Germans stuck their heads out of the windows. He decided the Germans were still there, so he beat it out of town. They shot at him, but didn't hit him.

Not long after he left my hole, I heard that he had been hit with a piece of flying shrapnel.

Lieutenant Kuhns, of the Third Platoon, dropped into my hole that same night. Kuhns had been our original Top Kicker, but had since been made an officer.

He said, 'Hello, Sergeant.'

'Hello, Kuhns.' (I should have said 'Mr.' Kuhns, and I guess he noticed the slip, but didn't say anything. Officers are always 'Mister,' even under fire.)

Kuhns: 'Those doughnuts the other night were a real treat. They certainly cheered the fellows up.'

I said: 'A little thing like that helps a whole lot. Nagel always tries his damnedest to give us good chow when we are on the line.'

Then Kuhns said, 'I hear James was killed yesterday up here.'

'Yes, he was sitting right there on the edge of that

little trench. He and three other fellows out of the original company were hit with the same shell. So was the kid who brought those doughnuts over to you . . .'

After a while Kuhns said, 'I wonder how many of the original Ninety-Seventh Company are left?'

'Not more than ten, I think . . . I've kept track as well as I could . . . That reminds me — do you remember that roll-call that you made about the first of June in the woods, just before we made our attack on Bouresches?'

'You mean when the Germans started to shell us before I got through?'

'Yes . . . Do you know that that was the last roll-call of the old Ninety-Seventh Company?'

'That's right — it was . . . I don't suppose the fellows realized that they were answering their last "here!"'

After Kuhns left, I sat back in my hole and things got to running through my mind. I suppose it was Kuhns being there that made me think of that last roll-call. The thought of all those fellows answering 'Here' for the last time gave me a queer feeling. Then the names on the old Ninety-Seventh roll got to drumming in my ears . . . Abbot, Adams, Allen, Askern, Aspinwall, Babcock, Bendow, Bowen . . . then the long list of 'C's' . . . Calahan, Carey, Carney, Clancy, Conroy, Corbet . . . I couldn't stop them. Then the men themselves began going by . . . They seemed to be riding on a sort of endless chain, in seats. The chain was creeping up a steep incline, each seat with a man in it . . . It seemed to slow up when it reached the top. I looked

carefully to see who each man was. . . . Some of the faces were very plain and some were blurred . . . They were the men of the old Ninety-Seventh Company. I looked for myself to come along, but I wasn't there. . . . Now and then there was a vacant seat, but very few. These must belong to the men who are still with us, I thought. I wondered if all the seats would be filled. . . . Then the moving chain gradually faded away and I forced myself to snap out of my dope.

CHAPTER XLVI

LATE that night orders came up that we could evacuate our positions and drop back to the rear, but nobody was to relieve us. We were to leave our positions, one unit — that is, one platoon or company — at a time, and we were to be as quiet as possible. They didn't want the Thirty-Sixth Division men to know that we were leaving and, of course, they didn't want the Germans to know. We were told to get out of the sector as fast as we could so as not to be seen anywhere near there in the morning.

About two-thirty in the morning, Kelton told me to get the men out and word was sent down the line. We left at a full run down the hill to our left and rear — no kind of formation. We kept on going until we reached the mounds on top of Mont Blanc. The Battalion P.C. was located here. We stopped to get our breath.

Some one came out and said: 'You fellows will have to hurry up and get out of here. They'll be shelling here in a few minutes.'

So we were on our way again. Our whole company was supposed to be there. There were fifty-five men.

We had traveled quite a distance. Kelton and I were walking together at the head. Suddenly he stopped short and turned to me:

'God! I left the bag with all the records and reports in it on top of the trench!'

I said, 'Here it is' . . . I had picked the bag up just as we were leaving and slung it over my shoulder.

He was relieved.

Kelton was a funny fellow. He crossed the field in front of Bouresches the day we were making our first attack last June, wearing an overseas cap and carrying a cane. He had just got back from a training school — the same school Spud Murphy had just come from. The men of Kelton's platoon called him 'Tee Hee,' because he had a funny laugh.

We hiked on back until we came to a once-upon-a-time-town — Tahure. It wasn't much of a town any more, mostly ruins. There was quite a bunch of men hanging around in Tahure from different outfits — mostly stragglers and men who had got lost from their companies. We stopped there for several hours.

I went down to a wash-room — a French wash-house. It was the first time I had washed in about fourteen days. It was the longest time I had ever gone so far without shaving. I had a good growth of whiskers and had half a notion to let them grow, but I shaved.

We went back to Suippes that night, and the next morning when I woke up the first thing I saw was our galley and Nagel getting breakfast. We hadn't seen the galley in nearly three weeks.

I went over and said hello to Nagel and asked him if there was any chow.

He said: 'There's lots of food, but no men to eat it. You're getting worse every time you come back. You didn't bring back a good-sized platoon this time.'

'Yes,' I said, 'and a few more days up there and you would have to eat all your chow yourself . . . By the

way, that was a dandy batch of doughnuts you sent up.'

'I would have sent up more, but I ran out of flour.'

The second morning after that I saw a long line of men getting chow at our galley. Nagel was standing at one side, so I went over to talk to him.

'What outfit are you cooking for now, Nagel?'

Nagel said, 'You mean this outfit? This is the new Ninety-Seventh Company.'

CHAPTER XLVII

SHORTLY after chow a runner brought word to me to report at the company office. I didn't know whether I was being pulled on the carpet for something or not. I had all kinds of alibis framed as to what I was going to say.

The office was on the second floor of a partly wrecked building. Sergeant Kirby and the corporal who took care of most of our paper work were there; also Captain McElroy, Lieutenant Kelton, and a couple of other officers.

McElroy came forward and shook hands, saying, 'Well, I hear the last one was pretty tough.'

'It kept us stepping for a while, all right.'

Then McElroy said, 'Have you the names of any men that in your estimation are entitled to decorations for unusual bravery?'

That made me stop and think. The idea of personal heroism on the battle-field was a dead issue with me. All places on the battle-field looked alike. You were under fire, and whether you were walking, running, or sitting, your chances of getting hit were the same. A man who stopped on the battle-field to help a wounded man was not a hero in my eyes. And it seemed to me that, as long as the whole bunch of us were together and taking the same chances, either we were all heroes or none of us were. I had yet to see a case of what might be called heroism. Capturing machine-gun nests and taking prisoners, and the like was not heroism. That

was the easiest part of the war — at least the most interesting. The toughest part was walking through a barrage or having to lie for days under constant shell fire waiting to get hit. And that was just regular stuff.

After some thought I finally decided on three men, so I said, 'There are three men that I think are entitled to decorations — Gray, Fred, and Shorty Carter.'

McElroy: 'What did they do?'

'Well, Gray and Fred acted as company runners up on the line and if there were any messages or running around to do they did it. Besides that, they carried most of the chow around to the other fellows, nearly always under shell fire. Shorty Carter made several trips to our hole from the Battalion P.C. in the face of counter-barrages.'

McElroy did not say anything, so I pulled out. I felt that I had not put up a very good case for the fellows I recommended. I was short of the words of praise that usually fill the reports of acts of bravery I had read about. Take, for instance, Sergeant Thompson, of the First Platoon. He could rattle off yards of regular citation stuff, good for any occasion. I'd have to study up on that kind of words.

Walking back to my billet the thought struck me that I really should have mentioned Lieutenant Kelton's name because he was the one that hollered at us to get out of that old basement on top of Mont Blanc when we were supposed to have been in danger of our own barrage. He exposed himself to machine-gun fire in order to warn us. Still, maybe that was done in the regular line of duty too.

CHAPTER XLVIII

We got orders to clean up and get ready for inspection by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and while we were standing by to move out, there were, as usual, a flock of rumors flying around.

'Yes, I heard that Roosevelt is bringing up special orders with him, releasing all Marines from the army and putting them back in the navy' . . .

'I heard that Pershing said that when he got through with the Marines there wouldn't be any left to go back in the navy . . .'

'Well, perhaps that's why Roosevelt is hurrying to get here so he can get us released before we are all shot to hell . . .'

'This would be a fine bunch of Marines to put on ship duty . . . There isn't a dozen in the whole outfit that knows the difference between a ship and a boat . . .'

(If there was anything that would get the old-timers' goats, it was to hear the new Marines say they came over on a boat!)

'I suppose you're one of them there sea-going Marines that still thinks the Marine Hymn is the National Anthem.' . . .

'Fall in!'

And it was not long until we were hitting along a road leading south from Suippes. About ten kilometers out we saw a field on our left with quite a gathering of men on it. Some of them were on horses.

We swung down the outskirts of the field in the rear of a machine-gun outfit with their mules. The men were arguing about how to swing into line for a parade.

We had been standing around only a short time when a bugle sounded. It startled us, as we had not heard a bugle for nearly a year, but we quickly formed. Then the band came on the field — I hadn't seen the band for some time — and with it came the flag. There were a number of men gathered around the reviewing stand and among them I could see some gobs.

We were all set to go. The band began to play and the parade was on. We marched from the side lines onto the field in a column of squads. Then 'squads left' into a platoon front and down the field we went.

'Eyes right! . . . Front!'

Roosevelt might have seen me, but I never did see him.

After passing in review we stood around to be inspected. It did not take very long. We were still rather close to the front and it would not do to have such a gang of men out in the open too long.

One thing stood out in that review . . . It was the first time I had marched behind an American flag in France.

CHAPTER XLIX

WHILE we were at Suippes, I ran into Bendow and we got to talking about the old bunch. I asked him if he had heard anything about Young since he was wounded.

'Yes . . . Young died at the hospital . . .'

We didn't say anything for a while and then Bendow said, 'There aren't many of the old fellows left any more.'

'No . . . As a matter of fact I was just figuring that right now you're the only man between me and death . . .'

Bendow said, 'How do you figure that out?'

'As far as I can find out we are the only ones left of the original bunch of non-coms . . . You'd better stick around for a while.'

'I guess you're out of luck, Nap. I'm leaving tomorrow to go to school. So if you get into any scraps before I come back — you're next!'

That night orders were received that we would pull out early the next morning with all equipment. Packs were to be rolled and everything ready by 6.30 A.M.

Morning came and we rushed around getting all set and we moved out on time. Bendow was standing in front of his billet as I went by. He was not going with us. He waved his hand at me and said, 'Good-bye, Nap.'

CHAPTER L

Our route lay to the northeast, across the section of the Champagne Sector that we had recently fought over. We skirted the region of Mont Blanc on the east.

Again our outfit was made up almost entirely of new men. Their packs were heavy and they were growling. They kept slugging water into them, although I warned them that water was hard to get and to go easy on the canteens.

The Third Platoon was leading at this time. We stopped for a ten-minute rest and I saw one of the men — Jim — I didn't know his last name — take his pack off and quickly start to undo it. Seldom do we take our packs off our backs. This fellow would have to go some to unroll his pack and then roll it up again in the time we had. He got it unrolled all right and he pulled out a good-sized empty artillery shell from the pack.

'What are you going to do with that?' I asked him.

'I was going to send it home for a souvenir,' he said, 'but it's too heavy to carry around.'

He was a new man who hadn't been near the front, so I asked, 'Where did you pick it up?'

'I bought it off a fellow at Suippes for three francs. He sold quite a few of them.'

There were a number of other fellows in my platoon who had German helmets hanging on their packs. As I knew they hadn't been near any front, I asked them where they got the helmets and they said they had

CHAPTER XLIX

WHILE we were at Suippes, I ran into Bendow and we got to talking about the old bunch. I asked him if he had heard anything about Young since he was wounded.

'Yes . . . Young died at the hospital . . .'

We didn't say anything for a while and then Bendow said, 'There aren't many of the old fellows left any more.'

'No . . . As a matter of fact I was just figuring that right now you're the only man between me and death . . .'

Bendow said, 'How do you figure that out?'

'As far as I can find out we are the only ones left of the original bunch of non-coms . . . You'd better stick around for a while.'

'I guess you're out of luck, Nap. I'm leaving tomorrow to go to school. So if you get into any scraps before I come back — you're next!'

That night orders were received that we would pull out early the next morning with all equipment. Packs were to be rolled and everything ready by 6.30 A.M.

Morning came and we rushed around getting all set and we moved out on time. Bendow was standing in front of his billet as I went by. He was not going with us. He waved his hand at me and said, 'Good-bye, Nap.'

CHAPTER L

Our route lay to the northeast, across the section of the Champagne Sector that we had recently fought over. We skirted the region of Mont Blanc on the east.

Again our outfit was made up almost entirely of new men. Their packs were heavy and they were growling. They kept slugging water into them, although I warned them that water was hard to get and to go easy on the canteens.

The Third Platoon was leading at this time. We stopped for a ten-minute rest and I saw one of the men — Jim — I didn't know his last name — take his pack off and quickly start to undo it. Seldom do we take our packs off our backs. This fellow would have to go some to unroll his pack and then roll it up again in the time we had. He got it unrolled all right and he pulled out a good-sized empty artillery shell from the pack.

'What are you going to do with that?' I asked him.

'I was going to send it home for a souvenir,' he said, 'but it's too heavy to carry around.'

He was a new man who hadn't been near the front, so I asked, 'Where did you pick it up?'

'I bought it off a fellow at Suippes for three francs. He sold quite a few of them.'

There were a number of other fellows in my platoon who had German helmets hanging on their packs. As I knew they hadn't been near any front, I asked them where they got the helmets and they said they had

bought them in Suippes for five francs. Somebody at Suippes must have had a regular souvenir store.

Along in the afternoon we were hitting it up — a regular forced hike. No rests, or maybe a short one at the end of each two hours. Then you would see the packs come open and the souvenir shells drop out. Some of the men would discard their whole blanket roll. German helmets were thrown by the wayside. The salvage detail would no doubt get them and peddle them again.

Every so many miles the platoons would shift places so as to give each platoon a chance to lead. It is not nearly so hard to walk when you are leading. You sort of set your own pace — besides, you don't get so much dust and smell. The tail-end of the company is the worst. One time you're crowding up, the next minute you are running. The leading platoon might sing, but the tail-end one is usually cursing.

Our platoon was leading this time, and I was tailing our platoon. I usually brought up the rear to keep track of men that fell out and to see that none of them threw away any equipment that was needed at the front, such as Chaut-Chaut bags of ammunition or rifles. They could throw away all the personal stuff they wanted to, including food, clothes, and blankets, but ammunition they had to carry.

Each squad had to carry in addition to their regular equipment two bags of Chaut-Chaut ammunition and each bag weighed eighteen pounds. One man would carry it so far and then pass it on to the next and so keep shifting the bags around. The men growled more

over these bags than anything else and they would throw them away if they got a chance.

In the last squad I noticed one of the fellows getting pretty wobbly on his pins. A Chaut-Chaut bag was passed to him, but he didn't have enough strength to get the strap over his shoulder, so I took the Chaut-Chaut bag from him and threw it over my shoulder.

Jim was in this same squad, and when he repacked his pack he didn't do it properly, so that it broke in the middle — that is, the blanket roll was separated from the haversack. The only thing holding the roll on was the strap on the tailpiece. This makes a mean pack to carry and he had to keep hoisting it up on his back. Besides the shell, he had also discarded a German helmet and an old bayonet, but now he was on his last legs.

As luck would have it he was passed the other Chaut-Chaut bag. He took it and got the straps over his shoulder. Then he staggered. Then he straightened. Then he hoisted his own pack and the Chaut-Chaut bag slipped off his shoulder. The man next to him caught it fortunately and handed it back to him. He slipped the straps over his shoulder again, but now he started to wobble from side to side, so I reached over and took the Chaut-Chaut bag off of him, and cursed him out good for having a broken pack.

Now I was carrying both the Chaut-Chaut bags as well as the rest of my equipment — and feeling like a martyr.

We were going along all right now. The fellows were too tired to growl, but none of my men had fallen out so

far when up comes a fellow from another platoon and hollers:

'Hey, Jim, come on — drop out. We don't have to kill ourselves.'

Jim started to answer back, and then he got a look at me. I don't know how I looked, but if it was anything like I felt, Jim saw sure death. If he had dropped out of his own accord, I would not have said anything. You can't stop men from falling out. But Jim was not going to drop out because somebody else told him to.

I said, 'Stay where you are.'

The other fellow was walking along parallel with our platoon, about twenty feet away. He heard me tell Jim to stay, so he hollered again, 'Come on, Jim. He can't make you stay . . .'

That was too much. I started toward the fellow doing the hollering. The Chaut-Chaut bags were awkward, so I couldn't move very fast, and that made me worse. Besides, being mad took some of my breath away. But I did get my automatic out. The fellow was all ready to argue, but I wasn't arguing, and when he saw the automatic he did not do any arguing either. I did not have breath enough left even to curse. I simply pointed back to his platoon and said, 'Get — or I'll kill you.' He went without saying a word.

I had to run to catch up with my platoon. Corporal Jenks, who had charge of the last squad, then saw that I was carrying the Chaut-Chaut bags belonging to his squad, so he came and got them.

Coming on toward evening we got to see-sawing back and forth on roads. One time we would be going

west, then east, then north. Finally we came to a halt near a crossroads.

The major and some other officers came over and stood out to one side sort of debating as to what route to take. One of the officers said, 'It should be around here somewhere' . . .

One of our new bunch piped up and said, 'Why the hell don't you ask one of the privates if you don't know which way to go?'

The major and officers heard, but they did not say anything. They moved on.

We went on then and tramped across a field to the woods. Here we found a deserted artillery camp that had been used by the departed Germans. There were a number of low wooden buildings among the trees and each platoon sergeant was told to pick one out for his platoon.

As soon as we had one that was big enough for the whole platoon, a runner came over and told us to assemble for chow. One platoon was to eat at a time, as we were within range of the German artillery and it wouldn't do to have us all assemble at once.

While we were lined up, Lieutenant Deming asked me to call the roll of the platoon to see how many men had fallen out on the way. I called the roll and there wasn't a man missing. Other platoons had from ten to fifteen men missing.

Nagel had got his galley up. In fact, for once, the supply train arrived before we did. For supper we had fried steaks and potatoes. That helped to cheer us all up.

That night I learned that we had been rushed up to take a bridge which was about one kilometer up ahead. The bridge was to be carried without any artillery preparation. The French wanted to save this bridge and for that reason refused to permit the use of artillery. The Germans were said to have massed quite a force of machine guns on the other side of the bridge in order to hold it.

We were still attached to the French army and subject to their orders.

We all turned in early that night, as it looked like a tough day to-morrow. Up ahead we could hear the German artillery banging away.

Next morning we had a good breakfast of boiled rice, syrup, bread, and coffee. I told Nagel there must be something in the wind or we shouldn't be getting such good chow.

Nagel said: 'Better feed them while we've got them . . . They are only good for a few meals.'

We hung around and hung around that morning, waiting. Finally about ten o'clock word came to make up our heavy packs and stand by to move out. I figured that we must be going to carry our heavy packs right into the line. Usually we made up combat packs this distance back, leaving our rolls behind.

We now fell in and hiked back through the field we had crossed over the night before. Two mules belonging to the Eighty-Second Company had been killed during the night by a stray German shell. They were lying out in the field as we went by.

We kept on going south, back over the very same

roads we had traveled the day before. I was puzzled. But so long as we were going south I asked no questions. Always the march to the north meant a battle. Seldom did the fellows who marched north ever march south again. For once we were marching south with a full company.

All day long we hiked south. We even sang, but the songs we sang were different from the old marching songs of months ago. 'Lulu and her Baby' wasn't as popular with the new bunch as she had been with the old bunch. Most of these fellows didn't even know it.

In times gone by the officers used to try to get us to sing nice songs, but that only brought out more new choruses in favor of 'Lulu' or 'Hinky Dinky Parley Vou.' We always made it a point to sing 'Lulu' good and loud whenever we passed a Y.M.C.A. building — or hut, as they were sometimes called. Finally it got so bad that every time we got near a 'Y' the officers would call us to attention and march us by in silence.

I'll never forget the Y.M.C.A. place at Châtillon. It was run by Mr. Lark, of Arkansas. Mr. Lark was a very nice gentleman and he would try to teach us nice songs and would pray for us. He always used a straight razor and would tell us that straight razors were for men like him and safety razors were for boys like us.

But one thing Mr. Lark did not like and that was the song about Lulu. He would not permit us to play it on the piano or sing it in his place. It does go very well with the piano, but it is strong enough to hold its own without it. So we would sing it outside the 'Y,' but

never during a period when services of any kind were going on, unless we didn't know about them.

Outside of 'Lulu,' we got along fine with Mr. Lark. He always called us 'fellows.' It was 'fellow' this and 'fellow' that.

One day he called me over to one side and said, 'Fellow, take a smell.' And he pulled the cork out of a bottle he had in his hand.

I took a sniff and said: 'That smells like cognac.'

Mr. Lark: 'It is cognac.'

Me: 'Where did you get it?'

Mr. Lark: 'A Frenchman gave it to me.'

Me: 'Let's drink it.'

Mr. Lark: 'Oh, no. I never touch anything like that. I just took it so the fellows wouldn't get it.'

Me: 'What are you going to do with it?'

Mr. Lark: 'I'm going to give some of the fellows a smell of it and then do away with it.'

The next day Mr. Lark called me over again. He looked troubled.

He said, 'Fellow, somebody stole my cognac.'

Me: 'You must have hid it away somewhere and forgot where you hid it.'

Mr. Lark: 'No, I had it right here under the counter. There were only a few of the fellows that knew I had it. You didn't see anybody take it, did you, fellow?'

Me: 'No . . . I don't think any of the men in this outfit would steal a bottle of cognac.'

Mr. Lark: 'If any of the fellows took it just to have some fun with me, I wish they would bring it back, as I want to return it to the Frenchman.'

Me: I'll keep my ears open, Mr. Lark, and if I hear anything about it, I'll let you know.'

I didn't say anything about my mouth, and it wasn't bad stuff.

As I was saying, the bunch now marching along the road were singing different songs. Some of them we had heard, like 'Over There,' which we sang as 'Over Here,' 'Katy, Beautiful Katy,' 'There's a Long, Long Trail,' and more like that. Nice songs, that they have in books, but no book ever held the song of 'Lulu.' You didn't have to learn that song. You just sang it. The new bunch will be singing 'Lulu' if they live long enough.

Night came on and we were assigned to an old barn, with its roof off, as a billet. It was a long barn and with proper arrangement all the men would fit in. In a case of this kind I went in and starting at one end of the building I took a step about two and a half feet. That was for one man. Then I went on and stepped off a place for each man. They followed behind and took the place assigned to them. Some of them took off their packs and sat down. Others went roaming around and by the time they got back their spaces had disappeared. The fellows next to the space had stretched out a little and the man that roamed was s.o.l.

Next morning we were on the road again, still hitting for the south. About noon we reached a wood six miles northeast of Suippes. This was to be our camp. Our galley pulled in shortly after we did and it was not long before we had our chow.

That long hike up and back — and it was at least thirty kilometers each way — had an air of mystery about it and we were naturally curious. We knew that we had been rushed up north for some purpose and for some reason we did not carry out the purpose. So what one of us did not find out the other did. We lived on rumors and could give the most detailed accounts of the most confidential matters that took place anywhere in the army, especially if it had anything to do with the Marines.

So the dope on the long hike was this: The Marines had been lent to the French for the purpose of capturing Mont Blanc which we did. After we were fully replaced, the French got the idea of making the assault on this bridge of theirs without using artillery. They wanted to save the bridge. They knew their own troops would not attack a machine gun, especially a whole outfit of them. They might have earlier in the war, but at this stage they were playing the game more safely. The French still had the Marines under their control, so they figured this bridge was a good place to try us out again. So up we went.

Our general is supposed to have gone up ahead and looked the situation over. It did not look good to him. It looked like outright murder to send his men up against such an obstacle without the use of artillery. General Lejeune is then supposed to have got into direct communication with the American Army Headquarters and requested them to order the immediate release of our division from the French. His request for transfer was rushed through and orders were tele-

graphed to French Headquarters to release the American division.

All this — so the rumor went — took place the afternoon and night that we were hiking toward the bridge, which was said to be located in the vicinity of Vouziers or Savigny across the river Aisne. The final transfer was made after midnight, in fact an hour or so before we were to attack.

After the transfer was made we became part of the American army again. General Lejeune was then reported to have told the commanding officer of the French that he had no objections to taking the bridge, but that he would take it his own way and use every means available.

We heard that this little incident caused hard feelings between our General and the French. Just where all this information came from is a question, but we got it and spread it and believed it. We never looked for the source. It was enough that we marched north as part of the French army and then marched south as part of the American army. We were willing to believe the rest was true, and General Lejeune got a lot of credit.

CHAPTER LI

We were all sitting alongside the road near the town of Sommes-Suippes, which is five kilometers east of Suippes on Route C.C. No. 7. A line of camions was coming in from the west. To the majority of the men the sight of the gray camions with the same old Chink drivers was new. This was to be their first camion trip.

'Where do we go from here, Sergeant?'

I said, 'Any time you see a line up of camions like this, you can bet your last sou that you're on your way to Paris! . . .'

Captain McElroy came down the line and assigned four camions to each platoon, saying, 'See that there is a non-commissioned officer placed in charge of each camion and that he is instructed to see that none of the men get out of the camions except at regular rest stops.'

I said: 'All right, sir. Men, get aboard — two squads to a camion . . . Pile your packs and stack your rifles in the passageway as far forward as you can . . . Better hang on to your gas masks.'

In a short time we were loaded up and on our way to — somewhere . . .

In the camion I was riding in, I was the only one that had ever ridden in a camion before. This was my fourth trip. The first ride was into Belleau Wood, Soissons was next, and then Mont Blanc; now this one. Each trip was worse than the one before. Fewer men came back. In my platoon there were four of us left

that were making a camion trip for the fourth time. Out of the whole company there were twelve. You ride in camions one way only and that is into battle.

I liked to ride with new men because they were more cheerful, and got a real kick out of the ride. They fooled around just as we did on our first trip.

In the afternoon we passed through the public square at Sainte-Menehould. It was full of American soldiers. Beyond Sainte-Menehould we passed quite a few long-range naval guns, manned by gobs. We hollered at them, but they didn't seem to know what it was all about. We tried to tell them we were Marines, but I think they understood us to ask, were they Marines? because they began to get chesty and look important. Still, even though they were only gobs they were not so bad to look at. They gave us a chance to open up a new line of wise-cracks.

It did not take our new men long to get onto the art of razzing other outfits. We just would not be friendly. We would even razz the Fifth Marines when nobody else was around and they were not a bit bashful in handing it back at us. We were each lousy outfits from the other's viewpoint.

Coming on toward evening the camions stopped in the little town of Les Islettes and we piled out, packs and all. Our ride was over. We swung packs and hiked north out of town. The road led toward a dark forest. Just as we were entering the woods, I noticed a French sign. It read:

FORET D'ARGONNE

CHAPTER LII

THE next morning we continued our northward hike. When passing through the ruined town of Varennes, we saw a burial detail at work. They were wrapping dead men in blankets.

We passed on up through Montblainville and Apremont. It was a very hilly country, and showed signs of having recently been fought over. We stopped for the night near Exermont, and the next day we moved into some woods between Sommerance and Romagne.

In the morning I noticed an outfit over on our right going through regular open-order drill, the kind we had back in the boot-camp on Parris Island, South Carolina. This outfit was also practicing the advance-by-rushes movement. The drilling struck me as rather odd, as we were close to the front line — one night's march at the most. I could also hear a great many clicks produced by pulling the trigger in an empty rifle. After a while they got through and were lined up and dismissed.

Later on a fellow came over from that direction and got to talking with me. Practically the first thing he said was, 'Have you had your trigger-squeeze exercise yet?'

I said, 'My trigger-squeeze exercise?'

'Yes, we had ours to-day . . . I think they are going to give us ammunition to-morrow and let us practice shooting.'

'What outfit are you with?' I asked.

'Outfit?'

He did not get what I meant by 'outfit.' Everything was an outfit to us. I said, 'Yes, what outfit or what regiment do you belong to?'

'Oh, I'm with the Twenty-Third Infantry.'

The Twenty-Third was part of our Second Division. The Second Division was considered one of the old-time divisions made up of Regulars and Marines. It was old when considered from the time it was first formed, but judging from the majority of the men now in it, it was a very new division. Still, it did not make much difference how old a man was in service. If he had never been under fire, he was still a new man. By under fire I mean — Had he walked into and through a German counter-barrage and come out the other side? When you came out the other side, you were an old-timer. The present Second Division was built around a skeleton of men that had come out the other side.

I did not get a chance to question this new fellow from the Twenty-Third any further, as Lieutenant Deming called me over.

He said: 'The company is to be assembled. Will you get the platoon together?'

The company was formed and we were marched over to an open space in the woods. It seemed as if our whole division was there. It was not long before we knew what was coming off. We had never known whether we really were part of the American army or the French army, but now it seemed we were to become part of the United States Fifth Army Corps.

Major-General Summerall was to be in charge of this army corps, and he was going to address us to-day.

Where I was standing I could hear him plainly.

The General told us what a wonderful outfit we were . . . how we had covered ourselves with glory in the past. . . . He told us about our heroic deeds at Belleau Wood, at Soissons, at Saint-Mihiel, and especially about our heroic deeds at Mont Blanc . . . How its capture had forced the Huns to evacuate all along the line and how this had relieved the pressure, especially in the Argonne Forest . . . How the ground we were now standing on had been fought over a short time ago . . . And how now General Pershing had seen fit to designate this division, that had never been defeated, that had never failed to reach its objective, to be the pivot to lead the way to break through the German stronghold up before us . . . 'You are chosen men . . .'

'Hog wash!' somebody hollered.

This caused quite a commotion. The officers had a worried look on their faces. The meeting broke up soon after that and we were marched back. Nothing was said, but we all had a rather guilty feeling.

CHAPTER LIII

AFTER we got back from our meeting with the General, Lieutenant Deming and I inspected the platoon to see if they had proper equipment. As soon as we finished with our inspection, Deming turned the platoon over to me and said, 'For the benefit of the new men you had better give them a little idea of what they may expect.'

I told them they would receive very few instructions or orders on the battle-field . . . That we usually started out in formation for artillery fire and as we closed in on the German line we deployed in a skirmish line. That we advanced behind a creeping barrage at an average walk . . . That there was no use ducking down every time a shell went over . . . That the safest place was behind your own barrage, say two hundred feet, and that if they kept ducking they would lose their barrage . . . That they were not to take any prisoners — that is, escort them back; just let them alone and simply point the way for them to go back . . . They were not to carry back any of their own wounded or any wounded . . . They could bind up a wound and make the man as comfortable as possible and then rejoin their outfit . . . That there were stretcher-bearers following us who would take care of the wounded . . . That it was no use shooting or bayoneting a man who had given up, but not to take any chances — if the German had a weapon, to shoot. Usually the ones that

were giving up would stand out plainly with their arms well up.

Somebody asked me about gas. I said the chances of being gassed were slim, as they used it very little in barrages, especially in open spaces. Gas was usually used only in the evenings, to fill woods and hollows. The only thing they could do was to watch me. If I put my mask on, to put theirs on too.

That night we made up our combat packs and stacked our blankets and other stuff in the forest. We moved out about 10.30 P.M. and took up positions on a hill about one kilometer farther north.

The next day two fellows from the Twelfth Field Artillery, which was part of our division, came over to our positions and we got to chewing the rag. We liked our artillery and they liked us pretty well. It was about the only outfit that we ever had a good word for.

The two artillerymen were telling us about the hard time they had getting out of the Mont Blanc section. The French wouldn't let them go. Our artillery had been attached to the Thirty-Sixth Division at Mont Blanc and the only thing that was worrying them was that they were going to be stuck with it. They couldn't imagine anything worse than that.

'We wouldn't have minded it so much if they were attaching us to some military outfit, but no — it had to be a National Guard outfit!'

I said, 'What kind of positions have the Germans up ahead — do you know?'

First artilleryman: 'It's a whole bunch of hills — I

guess it's a tough place, but nothing like Mont Blanc.'

Second artilleryman: 'You fellows wouldn't have been called in here at all if that lousy Forty-Second Division that's now holding the line was any good. They've been up here for nearly a month and haven't advanced ten feet. The artillery got tired sending over barrages for them. They're worse than the Thirty-Sixth.'

First artilleryman: 'We had a hell of an argument with a bunch of the Forty-Second infantrymen last night. We called them everything we could think of. I told them — 'wait until they run the Marines in here. They'll show you how to take those German positions.' One of the Forty-Second said, 'I'll bet you any amount of money you got that the Marines will not carry the German positions up ahead.' Three of us dug up a hundred francs and offered to bet it that the Marines would carry the positions — and the Forty-Second bunch took it. The money is in the hands of one of the Forty-Second Division artillerymen now.'

'When are we supposed to attack?' I asked.

'To-morrow morning, I understand. We have orders to start moving our artillery the same time you fellows go forward.'

Late that night we started to move out and at midnight we were in a sunken road on the outskirts of the town of Landres Saint-Georges. The Forty-Second Division was dug in around the same neighborhood and I had a hard time keeping the men of my platoon from getting mixed with the Forty-Second.

God Have Mercy on Us!

The Forty-Second Division was known as the Rainbow Division. It was right here near Landres Saint-Georges that we branded them with a few choice remarks, such as,

'What comes out after the storm?'

'The Rainbow!'

'What's the color of the Rainbow?'

'Yellow!'

CHAPTER LIV

Our barrage this early morning of November 1 was the worst I had ever heard. The barrages at Saint-Mihiel and Mont Blanc were bad, but this one now passing over our heads had them all skinned. If the barrage at Saint-Mihiel was a million-dollar barrage, this was a four-million-dollar barrage. It sounded mad. It thundered forth and kept increasing in volume as the morning hours advanced. The sky in back of us was fiery red from the flashes. At 4 A.M. the red seemed to burst into flames. Hundreds of new batteries must have swung into action. The roar grew into a clang.

I was in a hole with Stout. I tried to get out. Either my legs were shaking or the ground was trembling. I had to sit on the side of the hole to get my bearings. I seemed to be under a blanket that was weighing down on me. The air was heavy and filled with picric-acid fumes. It was still pitch dark.

I had orders to have the men up and down on the sunken road by five o'clock. If they felt the way I did, it was going to be some job to get them out of their holes. I went around first and got the corporals on their feet, and told them to help me poke the rest of the men out.

There was no use hollering, as you couldn't hear your own voice. It was a case of pulling at each man. If they were in deep holes, I had to prod them with the butt of my rifle. Some had gas masks on and the eye-pieces would flash up at me. I made them take their

masks off. It was hard enough to move around without gas masks. Some of the fellows said they were sick, but I made them get up just the same. I knew the symptoms. I told them they would feel better after they had been on their feet a while.

They all got up at last and we moved over to the bank above the sunken road. I had half the platoon jump down onto the road and cross to the other bank. The Germans were shelling this road and a bunch of men on our right had just been hit. There were quite a number of badly mangled bodies lying in the road. It was a very discouraging sight for men, new ones at that, who were about to make an attack.

Another shell landed and hit a fellow who was already wounded. It seemed worse to see a wounded man hit than to see a well man hit. This man let out a most terrifying shriek. It was the first time I had heard man cry out loud. I've heard them moan and sob, but this wounded man yelled. He seemed insane. Two men dragged him across the road to the north bank.

Some of my men hesitated about crossing the road and I cursed them out plenty. I had to in order to get their minds off what was happening. I seldom curse directly at men, especially under fire, but this time it was necessary for their own good.

Down the road farther I saw Captain McElroy and Lieutenant Deming. My watch said five o'clock. I caught McElroy's eye and pointed north. He nodded — yes.

I climbed up the opposite bank. A barbed-wire fence

ran along the top. Moran's squad was coming up the bank so I got three of his men to pull up two posts. Then I stood on the wire and held it down. As each man passed me, I said, 'Run for the top of that hill ahead and wait till I get there.'

I had to wait until all the platoon got across before I could go on. The German shelling was getting worse all the time. Our barrage had died down to nothing. All that were working were the batteries that were laying down the rolling barrage. Our machine guns were still hitting it up for all they were worth.

After the last man passed, I ducked to the top of the hill. The men were lying down on the southern slope. Looking over the top of the hill, I could see a line of skirmishers down in the valley below. I passed the word to my men to form for artillery fire and keep a good interval between groups. Then I passed over the top of the hill and beckoned to the men to come on. I let them go down this next slope on a dog-trot and halted them up at the bottom in order to give the line on the right a chance to catch up and also to allow the front wave of skirmishers to get ahead. The rolling barrage was falling just ahead of the first wave, so they could go only so fast, and we, in the second wave, were supposed to move only as fast as the first one.

The slope of the hill we just came down was under a hot fire and the quicker we got off of it, the better. I crossed over to the right of the platoon to where I had seen Captain McElroy. I wanted to find out what outfit was on our left, as I couldn't see anybody on that side.

I found the captain and asked him and he said, 'The —— Division is supposed to be there.'

I told him I hadn't seen anybody so far this morning, and McElroy said: 'Perhaps they are held up. You'll have to watch the left flank, but guide right.'

As I moved over to the left flank I told each group to guide right. It seemed to me that my platoon was always on some flank.

The line now moved up the hill. I reached the top first, as I usually went ahead. In the next valley was a system of trenches and I could see quite a number of Germans standing along the trenches with their arms up. The front wave passed on through the Germans. Usually the second or possibly the third wave does the cleaning-up. The front wave must keep up with their barrage.

The Germans put their arms down and stood watching the first wave go by, but just as soon as we came over the hill, up went their arms again. Word came from McElroy to keep on advancing and leave the trench for the next wave.

We were more of an attacking wave than moppers-up. If the front wave met resistance, we would move right up to them and battle with them. The front wave acts as feelers.

There were not more than sixty Germans in the trench, although there were quite a number of dead and wounded lying around the bottom. Our advance this morning had been very rapid. We were right on the heels of the barrage and the Germans did not have much chance to get organized.

The German counter-barrage was not falling in this valley, and from the looks of things there would be fine pickings for our souvenir hounds. I made sure that my platoon did not stop, although some of the fellows did manage to get a few iron crosses. Every German had an iron cross. They were as common as French Croix de Guerre. Our men would be wearing the hero decorations of all nations. About this time also the craze started for collecting German belts with 'GOTT MITT UNS' buckles on them. Most of the fellows had one or more of these hung around them.

Out of this peaceful valley we ascended to one wicked hilltop. The German artillery was waking up to the fact that a real advance was on and that their men who had been holding the line were either captured or killed.

Looking over the top of this next hill, I saw a snarling valley below. It had a mean look. The German fire seemed to be concentrated there. The exploding shells were kicking up dust and smoke which threw the valley into darkness. Usually I advanced fifty feet or so ahead of the platoon, but going down into this valley I had to stick close so they could see me. The slope of the hill was one mass of shell holes and we had to pick our way among them.

I hurried the men and beckoned them on regardless of the line on the right or the men ahead of us. It's in places like this that the men have got to be kept moving. Once they get down, they are through. Just as soon as they get to looking for shelter, your battle is over.

That was one of the reasons I was never very keen about the rush-and-flop system. The rush was all right, but it was hell getting up again, especially if there was any shelling. It takes a long period of training to get a bunch to work together on the rush system. With new men it's better to walk them right into it. Their chances are about even, as there are just as many hit lying down as standing up.

My platoon was in the southern part of the valley while the wave ahead was starting to climb up the northern slope of the next hill. The rest of the company on the right were still coming down the last hill. I advanced the platoon across the valley, as there was more protection from artillery fire on the northern slope, and let them lie down and rest.

Looking over to the right, I noticed a strange column of men cutting across the regular line of advance. They reached the valley, crossed it, and started up the hill we were on. Moran and Reed were sitting with me, so I told them to hold the platoon until I got back. I cut across to the head of the advancing column. A lieutenant was in charge and I asked, 'What outfit is this?'

He said, 'Second Division Engineers.'

'You're getting ahead of the attacking troops,' I said. 'Where are you headed for?'

Lieutenant: 'We are on our way to fix a bridge near Imecourt so you fellows can cross . . .'

'But our barrage is falling on top of this hill now. You'd better take your time or you will bump into it.'

They kept on going, but I noticed they slackened

down before reaching the top. It seemed rather funny to have a bunch of engineers go ahead of the attacking troops to smooth the way. We were advancing under artillery fire in a supposedly scientific manner, but the engineers were in a regular column of twos and they were getting by just as well as we were.

By the time I got back to the platoon, the rest of the company were crossing the valley. We advanced up the hill. The air seemed much clearer on this side and I could keep in sight of the platoon at a fair distance. It always seemed much easier to keep the men moving when I was ahead of them. They would manage to come up to where I was. Then I would move ahead again. I knew the German counter-barrage was falling in a definite area, and once we got through it we were pretty safe. There would still be machine guns and the Germans themselves. However, the actual sight of a German was only a spur to go on. The trouble was that the Germans would not stand long enough.

The German fire was getting hotter, and I figured we must be getting into the real heart of their counter-barrage. I could hear machine guns working up ahead.

I beckoned to the men to come on. First I would be close to them and then I would ease farther away. They all seemed to have a peculiar look in their eyes and it followed me. It wasn't an accusing look; it was more of a doubtful look. Their eyeballs seemed turned up, causing the whites of their eyes to fill most of the socket. The dark part was covered by the upper lid.

Whether it was the effect of these staring eyes on me

or the fact that I seemed to be coaxing these fellows on to death, I don't know, but a picture flashed across my mind:

Back in the Chicago stockyards there was a goat called Hughy the Wise. It was Hughy's job to lead sheep from the outside pens up to the door of the slaughter-house. Hughy would be brought into a pen full of sheep. A gate leading to a chute would be thrown open. Hughy would trot nimbly out and up the chute he would go. The unsuspecting sheep would go ambling after him. At a certain spot a gate would close on the sheep. They were caught. Then the air would be filled with confused cries of *ma-a-a*. Hughy would say *ba-a-a*, then duck around to the rear and escape through a gate held open for him. Then he would go back and get another bunch of sheep.

As time went on Hughy grew wiser and lazier. He began to hide out and take naps between trips. Hughy went from bad to worse. Then one day he led up a bunch of sheep. The gate closed and the sheep said *ma-a-a*. Hughy said *ba-a-a* and ducked for the gate in the rear. But this day the gate didn't open.

CHAPTER LV

Two shells burst in front of the groups on the left and the men went down. Then I saw Red Farley, one of our new men who was acting corporal in charge of the left group, sit up with one hand supporting him. He looked my way, and I beckoned him to come on. He turned to the men behind him and they all got up and moved ahead. I thought they had all been hit.

A hurricane seemed to be raging along the top of the hill. The German artillery was pounding at it from the front and their machine guns were sweeping it from the left. The hill seemed to be a half round-top, with the western and southern slopes continuous. The western slope, which was on our left, had a hump or ridge on it that extended clear to the top. Along this hump was a wide barbed-wire entanglement. Our artillery had partly destroyed this wire, but not enough to permit us to get through. I crawled along looking for openings, and about fifty feet down I came to a narrow opening in the wires that extended clear through. I made a rush through the opening, nearly reached the other side, but tripped over a wire and fell flat. A stream of machine-gun bullets passed over me and I could hear them go *zing!* against the wires. It is possible that I tripped over a signal wire, because the gun-firing had me pinned to the ground the minute I fell.

I waited a few seconds and it quit. I got a glimpse of the country ahead of me. It was full of deep shell holes.

Down on my left a road ran along the foot of the hill: across the road was a graveyard and in back of that was a wood.

I started down the hill for the road on a run. The machine gun opened up, but it shot too high. About halfway down the hill I noticed a German ducking through the graveyard. A ditch ran along the road and I flopped into it.

In a few minutes I saw Reed crawling along the ditch toward me. He had his Chaut-Chaut and bag of ammunition. When he reached me, I said, 'Is the rest of the platoon on the hill?'

'Yes; they're coming down the other side of the wire.'

I said, 'There are Germans across the way, either in that graveyard or in the rear of it.'

Reed said, 'I saw a couple moving along the wall when I came down.'

The graveyard had a stone wall around it with one entrance at the front, and I told Reed to set up his Chaut-Chaut over at that gate until I could get the rest of the platoon down there.

Reed ducked across the road and a couple more fellows came crawling down the ditch — Red Farley and Gidney.

Red hollered at me, 'Do you want the rest of the platoon down here?'

'Yes; but you come over here first.'

Red came up, and I said: 'Tell Moran and Larson to place their men along the wall on this side of the graveyard and tell Sweet and Jenks to get along the wall on

the other side . . . Your group and the rest will stay here in this ditch. I'll be across at that gate . . . Let me know when you get set.'

Red beat it back down the ditch and I took Gidney across to the gate. A German machine gun was still banging away out in front of us and Reed was shooting short bursts into the graveyard as if he had something spotted.

I called to him, 'Are there many in there?'

'I saw only four . . . I'll have to get a spot inside. Those tombstones up front block my fire.'

'It might be better inside this front wall . . . Hey, Gidney, see that broad stone with the name Vinot on it . . . you hit for that grave when I say go. Pull your gun over, Reed, until we get inside. All right, Gidney — go.'

Gidney made a dash and I popped in right behind him and sized up the inside front wall. I figured if there were any Germans along the wall, they would have to turn to shoot at Gidney and I could beat them to it.

I dropped behind a tombstone and hollered to Gidney to open up with a few shots toward the rear end of the graveyard, whether he saw anybody or not. The Germans were back there somewhere and beginning to pop away at us.

Both Gidney and I opened up, but there were quite a number of tombstones and it was as bad shooting among them as it was shooting in among trees. Reed crawled in and took up a position on a raised grave on my left. It had a low tombstone on it, just

about the right height for the Chaut-Chaut, and when Reed stretched out on the grave, the stone gave him a little protection.

As soon as Reed got all set, I crawled back out, but told Gidney to stick with Reed. Moran and Larson had their men lined up O.K. Jenks and Sweet were just moving in along the other wall, the north wall. The graveyard ran east and west. The entrance was on the east end, and the west end or rear ended at the woods.

Red Farley now came across and said there were three groups in the ditch. Moran and Larson came over, and I told them they were to move along the south wall; that the group on the other side would move along the north wall and two groups would go with me through the graveyard. One group would remain behind with orders to watch both walls, and if anything broke on either side to move right up on that side.

Moran said, 'How would it be to rush right to the end and surround the graveyard?'

'Better not. I don't know where the hell the Germans are. They are likely to be back in the woods strong . . . Tell you what you do — move down twenty-five feet and wait. When we get that far inside, one of the fellows inside will stick his rifle up alongside the wall. You ought to be able to see the bayonet, as the wall is not high. He will do that about every ten feet. You guide on that.'

I told Sweet and Jenks the same thing. They could hear my voice across the wall when things were quiet, but not when firing was going on.

I had Farley move the two groups from the ditch, across to the front wall. Then they entered the cemetery one at a time. One group was to move along the inside of each wall.

Reed and Gidney were still blazing away and I asked Reed if he had anything lined up.

'Four Krauts came in over the rear wall and there is a machine gun just below that rise, either behind that tall tombstone or that stone cross, but I'm too far back to get him.'

'We're going to advance . . . You'd better move down this path between the graves.'

Over on the right side there was another path like the one Reed was to use, and I had Petrie, who had a Chaut-Chaut, advance down it. He was to guide on Reed.

The fire from the Germans was getting heavier, but it wasn't doing us any damage, as the men were crawling on their bellies between the graves. Of course we were not hitting any of the Germans either, as they were down too. Twenty-five feet down I had a man on each side push his rifle up so that it stuck over the wall. I could not hear any firing outside the wall, so the men must be coming along all right.

The ground began to get worse. Quite a few big shells had landed around here and torn up the graves, scattering bones and tombstones in all directions. This made the ground loose and soft and we sunk into it, especially when crawling in and out of the holes. I had to push the bones to one side so they would not catch on my gas-mask bag.

Reed beckoned to me, and when I crossed over to

him, he said: 'The machine gun is behind that stone cross. I can just see the end of it stick out, but I can't get it from this side.'

'I'll see if I can do anything from the other side.'

I knew just about where to aim, so I got behind the other Chaut-Chaut myself and got a good line on the edge of the stone cross and turned the gun loose for several strings of five shots each. I was nipping the edge of the cross, but I couldn't get quite low enough on its base. I moved the gun about ten feet forward to a higher grave and was getting all sighted up when *crack-crack-crack!* a stream of machine-gun bullets beat against the stone in front of me. I didn't poke my nose up for a few minutes, as the machine gun kept belting away, chipping the top and edges off the tombstone I was behind, which bore the name of Léon Pierron, who died in 1885. I couldn't help memorizing the name and date, as they were right before my eyes. I was glad they furnished Pierron with a good stout stone.

The machine gun finally let up, and I got the Chaut-Chaut trained on the outer edge of the base of the cross and blazed away again. As long as I kept firing, the machine gun was quiet. I motioned for Petrie to come over and told him to keep the gun trained on that cross.

Gidney was over a short way, and I crawled to him and said, 'See that tall monument up ahead that is tilted to one side — the one close to the cross?'

'Yes.'

'Hop that wall on your left and tell either Larson or

Moran to send men with grenades down a short way below the tall monument and have them heave four grenades, one right after the other, straight for the monument. They can see it from the other side of the wall. Remember now, only four grenades.'

Red Farley was over on the right. I hollered to him, 'Be ready to advance,' and to Petrie, 'Keep up a steady fire, but watch our advance.'

Reed was to advance part way with us firing from the hip. He was one of the few men who could shoot a Chaut-Chaut from the hip and hit anything.

I told the men along the inside of the left wall to be ready for a rush. I waited a few minutes. The first grenade exploded with a bang. We rushed forward about five feet. The second grenade went off and we made another five feet. As the third went off, I swung the men out from the wall and we were going at a dead run across the graveyard when the fourth grenade exploded.

The distance to the stone cross was about a hundred feet and we could see the Germans running toward the rear wall, but we didn't stop to shoot until we passed the stone cross where the machine gun was. We then opened up and shot them down as they tried to crawl over the wall. The machine gun had remained silent during our attack. A grenade had hit the German gunner direct, mashing him against the cross.

The inside of the graveyard was now clear of Germans, but outside the wall on the right where Sweet and Jenks were, there was heavy firing. I told the men

inside to remain behind the rear wall until I found out what was doing. Just then Larson stuck his head over the left and I hollered at him, 'Swing your men around in back of the rear wall, but keep clear of the right side wall.'

I lined up three men, and while they were heaving two grenades apiece over the wall into the woods on the right, the rest of the men got over the wall on the left side and joined up with Moran and Larson's men. I followed.

The men in back of the rear wall were blazing away by the time I got around there. I extended the line farther out in the woods to the left and told the men to be ready to close in on the Germans in case they started to retreat.

The fire from the flank took all the fight out of the Germans in a few minutes. They started to fall back, but the fire from the men farther in the woods checked them and threw them into confusion. Our men in front now charged and at the same time the men closed in on the left and rear. The Germans were caught. The ones that gave up fast enough lived.

Altogether there were eighteen prisoners taken, which included the wounded.

Three of Jenks's men had been slightly wounded, but not enough to hinder them in walking. They were given a German Luger apiece and put in charge of the prisoners. The Germans were made to carry their own wounded.

Over the high hill to the east — the one we had come down from a short time ago — I could see our men still

advancing. There was no machine gun sweeping it from the west now.

The road and the woods met farther to the north, so we struck out along the edge of the woods until we hit the road. Up this road a way we came across a bunch of men repairing a bridge. They were the men of the Second Engineers who had crossed through our lines back on the hill. I asked one of them if any of our men had gone by lately.

He said: 'They are crossing on the other side of town. Take the road on that side of the creek and you will meet up with them.'

The town near this bridge might have been called Imecourt at one time, but now it looked like a hog-wallow. Nothing but our artillery fire could have done such a thorough job of mixing up a creek and a town. There weren't any ruins. It looked as though a giant plough had been driven through and simply turned the town in under.

About a fourth of a kilometer farther on, we came to a big wide-open scooped-out place where troops were gathering. I saw part of our company lined up against the north bank, so I closed my platoon over with them. Then I saw Captain McElroy and Lieutenants Deming and Kelton talking together and I went over and asked them, 'Is this our objective?'

McElroy said: 'No, we'll be going ahead again in eight minutes. The Second Battalion is up ahead digging in and we will pass through them.'

'Will there be any other outfit ahead of us?'

'No, we will be the first wave. Our rolling barrage

should be falling two hundred feet ahead of us when we pass the Second Battalion lines.'

I went back to the platoon. Gidney said, 'Are we through for the day, Sergeant?'

'Christ! we haven't begun yet!'

CHAPTER LVI

TIME was up. We climbed over the bank of the scooped-out basin and started north again. Ahead of us was a rolling country broken up with large and small patches of woods. Far to the north were several hills that rose above the rest.

We now leap-frogged the Second Battalion — that is, passed through their lines. They were already dug in, having reached their morning's objective. Our artillery had been firing away to the north during our short rest period and it now shortened down and began dropping shells directly in front of us, about two hundred feet. We were deployed in a thin line of skirmishers and advanced at a slow walk. Our guide was right. My platoon was on the extreme left flank.

The Germans were shelling the field we crossed, but their fire was light compared to what it had been earlier in the day. Once in a while one of our shells fell short and kicked up the ground right in front of us. Some even fell behind us. One crashed into the Third Platoon, next to us on the right, killing two men.

We went up a low ridge, and there ahead of us were the Germans, coming toward us right out in the open field! First a few stragglers, then groups. They were holding their hands in the air, and hanging from their hands were watches, knives on chains, and other trinkets!

Then the battle of souvenirs began. Our men would

race out and grab the junk from the Germans. This got so bad that it interfered with our advance. I had to order the men in my platoon not to leave their positions. I also stopped men from other platoons from crossing over in front of my platoon. They would duck over, grab a watch or something, and beat it back. This, of course, made the men in my platoon sore, and I was afraid they might start a real fight. If let alone they would have run through our own barrage to collect souvenirs.

I don't know how the Germans discovered our weakness for souvenirs, but this bunch of Germans sure had us down pat! It was funny to watch them. They would come toward us either dangling a watch or with their hands stretched out holding money, rings, and such stuff. Our men would grab everything in sight. The Germans would then pass through our wave swinging their hands at their sides, feeling, I suppose, that they had paid their admission and were now entitled to travel at will.

But they didn't know what was coming. Behind us was another line of souvenir hounds. They would pounce on the Germans and search them and clean them up right — pull off their belts and buckles, rip buttons off their coats and insignia off their collars.

Then the Germans would go on only to hit another line of our men. Each line would frisk them. By the time they reached the rear, they must have been naked. Once at the rear somebody would round up a bunch of them who had been through the souvenir mill and march them to regimental or brigade headquarters

and take credit for capturing fifteen or twenty Germans single-handed and in due time receive a medal.

It struck me that if the Germans had shot over souvenirs instead of shrapnel and such, they would have had a better chance of stopping our advance. Our men would have fought among themselves to get the souvenirs.

After the men were stopped from ducking out of line to grab souvenirs, some of them began to use their heads. They would see some Germans coming and would wave their arms for the Germans to come over their way, but the other fellows soon got wise and would wave the Germans back again. The result was the Germans didn't know what to do and simply stopped where they were . . .

The two barrages came together. They seemed to lock horns and wrestle for the hilltop. Clouds of dust and dirt rose from the hill like smoke and floated off to the right. Our barrage went on, but the German barrage kept pounding away.

Word came from Captain McElroy to advance only a part of the platoon over the top of the hill at a time. I took the left half up first, but when I saw what was in the valley below, I stopped and made the men get down behind the crest of the hill.

Down below was a long line-up of German artillery in plain sight. They were firing point-blank at the top of the hill. I had the first half crawl into position and open up with their rifles and Chaut-Chauts at the battery positions below, which were not more than six hundred yards away. I also beckoned for the rest of

the platoon to come up on the line and begin firing.

On the right one of our tanks came slowly over the hill moving toward the German lines. It helped us on the left because it drew a great part of the German fire away from us.

From my position on the left I could see groups of Germans ducking behind a clump of trees close to the bottom, and after a while they appeared in the open country farther back, running toward Germany.

There was no chance of making a straight frontal attack on them, as our barrage was blocking the way. I noticed, however, that our barrage ended on a definite line on the left. There was no reason why we couldn't go down along the left boundary of our barrage and cut off the escaping Germans. So I took the first two groups on the left, led them beyond the left line of our barrage, and started down the hill on a run for the clump of trees where the Germans were disappearing. I left word with the rest of the platoon to keep up a steady fire on this spot until we crossed a road at the foot of the hill and not to shoot into us.

We got down the hill and across the road all right. This left our barrage in back of us. We opened fire on the clump of trees and bushes at close range, and in a very short time twenty or thirty Germans came out with their hands up. Our fire also quieted down the batteries.

Our barrage was closing in on us, so we backed the Germans well over to the left to escape it. Two men were left with the prisoners and the rest of us entered the clump of trees. A short distance in was a good-

sized creek with a small bridge across it. The Germans had been using this bridge to escape by. The German artillery was along this creek, but it was now silent. Our barrage was falling on the other side of the creek. Our lines had reached the road and come to a stop.

Captain McElroy and some other officers were having a confab on the road. Some of the officers insisted that this road was our objective. I saw one of the maps they had, and our objective was marked as the road running between Buzancy and Bayonville. The road we were on had a marker showing Sivry-les-Buzancy on our left and Bayonville on our right. McElroy had a regular map which showed another road up ahead running between Buzancy and Bayonville. Men were sent up ahead to locate this road before advancing the rest of the company. They reported back that the road lay about five hundred yards ahead.

The place along here had been a German artillery camp and our men were now prowling around in dugouts looking for souvenirs. Back in the trees close to the creek I came across an officer's tent. It had a table in it, and on top of the table were stacks of letters that he must have been censoring. Some of our fellows could read German and they read the letters aloud. Some were to mothers, sisters, sweethearts, etc., saying that they expected to be home soon, and others were hoping to spend Christmas at home. Our fellows wanted to keep the letters, but we had positive orders not to pick up any form of documents and to leave them for the Intelligence Section — the 'Wise-Guy Section,' as we called it.

I came upon three Germans, one wounded and bellowing his head off, supposedly from pain, with a rifle bullet through his thigh. I directed the other two Germans to pick him up and carry him. One of the Germans made motions that he wanted to get something out of his dugout. I said yes. He ducked in and came out with a bundle tied up in a handkerchief. It had bread and other stuff in it. He showed it to me, and I said all right. Then he made motions that he wanted to get something else, so I let him go again. He came out with a blanket. Then he wanted to go back once more, but I said 'Nix.' I made the two Germans cross hands to form a chair so the wounded fellow could sit on them and put his arms around their necks. They got all set to go, and I was starting away when I noticed an American stop them. I walked back and he was busy tearing off the red insignia they had on their neckbands I told him to leave our prisoners alone. He had got one insigne off. He walked away, but didn't say a word. He was an officer.

I crossed the creek and started across the fields for the other road. The men were all busy collecting souvenirs: they even stole the sights off the cannons. The German dead were lying there stretched out, all pockets turned inside out, all buttons cut off, belts removed.

I got my bunch together and we reached the other road, which was only a short distance away. McElroy was standing there and had a handkerchief tied around his hand. I asked him what happened, and he told me he had been struck by a piece of shrapnel and took off

the handkerchief and showed it to me. He was our captain, but I told him he had better go back with that hand and have it taken care of. He said he would after the men had all got dug in. He did not want to go, but the other officers insisted, too, so he finally went back. I did not like to see him go. He was a nice fellow — besides that, he gave me a cigar once.

We dug in for the night along the road running between Buzancy and Bayonville. In front of us, to our left, was a wood called Bois de la Polie. My platoon was dug in on the extreme left flank. Coming on toward dark I saw a German coming down the road from Buzancy, which lay on our left. He stopped at the first hole and the fellow sitting in it directed the German to me. He came up; he could talk a little English. He told me his captain was over in the woods on our left, wounded, and asked me to send men to get him. He was the captain's orderly. I asked several of the fellows if they wanted to go and get the German captain, but none of them moved. I told the orderly: 'You go and carry him in yourself. The first-aid station is at Bayonville on our right.' About fifteen minutes or so later, he came staggering down the road with the captain and I pointed the way to the first-aid station.

I noticed three of our fellows acting kind of funny. They would sneak out across the field, then come back, and all huddle in one hole. So I went over and said, 'What's up?'

One fellow showed me a watch, another some German coins, and he said: 'There's a wounded German across the way and we are waiting for him to die so we can go

through him. We don't like to do it while he's still alive.'

They crept out again and were gone quite a while. Finally they came back. They had a loaf of black bread and several trinkets, buttons, buckles, and collar ornaments. The German had died.

Passing along the holes, I could hear the fellows arguing and bargaining,

'I'll swap you three iron crosses and a knife for the watch.'

'What the hell! I've got two iron crosses now.'

Red Farley and Gidney were dug in together and I could hear them muttering away as they sat humped over, sorting over their junk.

It began to rain and the water ran off the road into our holes. I made a little dam along the edge of my hole to keep the water back. I sat in my hole using my helmet for a seat: it kept me out of the water. Now and then a shell would hit over our way. One piece of shrapnel flew into the hole and landed on the back of my hand — and was it hot! Luckily there was no force behind it. It was spent.

Something came *plunk!* in the water beside me. Then I heard it move. No lights were allowed, so I felt down with my hand. I closed in on something soft and clammy. It was a frog — a real one — and I let him stay there.

CHAPTER LVII

EARLY the next morning we rose from our watery beds. It was still drizzling and a fog hung about us. A plane was overhead, but we could not make out what it was. It was flying low. There was a break in the fog then, and we saw the black cross at the bottom. Somebody began to take pot-shots at it with their rifles. The lieutenant ordered them not to fire, as he did not want to invite any bombs our way. The plane soon flew away without flipping off any eggs. Some planes just seem to lift their tail-ends and drop off a few.

We started out in open order. The country was rough and wooded, so we closed up in combat groups We advanced fairly fast, deploying at various times to search the woods thoroughly. We came to the town of Fosse and formed for battle, but the town was deserted except for a few prisoners.

While here another German airplane came over and we all fired together at it. Somebody said they saw it drop beyond the hill, so we took credit for having shot down an airplane. I don't suppose there is an outfit which doesn't claim to have shot down an airplane.

It was a very quiet day. That night we slept in the open; no blankets, but we had overcoats. I pulled mine over my head to keep the rain off my face. The ground was soggy. I was lying on my right side and decided to roll over. My right shoulder had buried itself in the ground — in fact, my whole right side. When I tried to

through him. We don't like to do it while he's still alive.'

They crept out again and were gone quite a while. Finally they came back. They had a loaf of black bread and several trinkets, buttons, buckles, and collar ornaments. The German had died.

Passing along the holes, I could hear the fellows arguing and bargaining,

'I'll swap you three iron crosses and a knife for the watch.'

'What the hell! I've got two iron crosses now.'

Red Farley and Gidney were dug in together and I could hear them muttering away as they sat humped over, sorting over their junk.

It began to rain and the water ran off the road into our holes. I made a little dam along the edge of my hole to keep the water back. I sat in my hole using my helmet for a seat: it kept me out of the water. Now and then a shell would hit over our way. One piece of shrapnel flew into the hole and landed on the back of my hand — and was it hot! Luckily there was no force behind it. It was spent.

Something came *plunk!* in the water beside me. Then I heard it move. No lights were allowed, so I felt down with my hand. I closed in on something soft and clammy. It was a frog — a real one — and I let him stay there.

CHAPTER LVII

EARLY the next morning we rose from our watery beds. It was still drizzling and a fog hung about us. A plane was overhead, but we could not make out what it was. It was flying low. There was a break in the fog then, and we saw the black cross at the bottom. Somebody began to take pot-shots at it with their rifles. The lieutenant ordered them not to fire, as he did not want to invite any bombs our way. The plane soon flew away without flipping off any eggs. Some planes just seem to lift their tail-ends and drop off a few.

We started out in open order. The country was rough and wooded, so we closed up in combat groups We advanced fairly fast, deploying at various times to search the woods thoroughly. We came to the town of Fosse and formed for battle, but the town was deserted except for a few prisoners.

While here another German airplane came over and we all fired together at it. Somebody said they saw it drop beyond the hill, so we took credit for having shot down an airplane. I don't suppose there is an outfit which doesn't claim to have shot down an airplane.

It was a very quiet day. That night we slept in the open; no blankets, but we had overcoats. I pulled mine over my head to keep the rain off my face. The ground was soggy. I was lying on my right side and decided to roll over. My right shoulder had buried itself in the ground — in fact, my whole right side. When I tried to

move, it made a suction sound like a cow pulling her foot out of the mud. Besides that I could feel the cold water running into the hole I had made. The water in the hole had been warmed from my body. I nestled back into the original groove and did not try to move again.

The next day we just hiked. The only delay we had was keeping in liaison with the outfits on our right and left. There wasn't a German in sight. We passed where they had been, saw deserted camps, and at several places the remains of horses that had been partly butchered. Big chunks had been cut out of them — boiling beef and stew.

When we reached the high woods near Belval and Vaux-en-Dieulet, our whole line seemed to make a complete right turn. We had been going mostly north and were within seven and a half kilometers of Beaumont. Now we were facing directly east with the Meuse River in front of us.

The roads from Fosse and Nouart came together right here and continued on as a single road over a steep wooded hill. The road was just a mud-hole from the rain — no bottom. The artillery were trying to get their guns up this hill, one gun at a time with forty horses pulling and the men pushing and cursing behind. We always laughed at other outfits' hard luck.

Below the town of Belval we entered the Forêt de Dieulet. The western portion was high and greatly broken up, but as we advanced into the interior, it gradually flattened out. This was one of the forests that we had been warned particularly about — to be on the

lookout for gas. Our artillery had shelled it continuously for days before our last attack, with nothing but gas. There was still gas in the low spots. The Germans were supposed to have had these woods full of artillery and from the looks of things they did. We passed several big artillery plotting boards nailed against the trees, boards that were from twelve to fifteen feet square. They showed every tree, hedge, and hole, and all elevations and depressions were clearly marked. Towns were laid out on them in regular street order with principal buildings marked. The boards were guarded, so our fellows wouldn't steal the maps.

We were held up on a road running between Beaumont and Stenay until liaison could be established with the Eighty-Ninth Division, which was on our right. This road also separated the Forêt de Dieulet from the Forêt de Jeaunet. Both forests were really continuous.

From what I could learn we were headed for either Inor or Pouilly on the Meuse River. We were not going through Sedan after all, which was a disappointment, as we always liked to go through big towns. It made us feel important.

The dope now came in that the bridges at both Inor and Pouilly had been blown up. That meant that we would have to cross the Meuse River on some home-made bridge or mud scow. The blowing-up of these bridges was no doubt the cause of our hanging around in these woods so long. We had been tramping around in them for a week at least. One day we would move east and the next day north. We did not seem to get anywhere except nearer to the German artillery.

The next morning Lieutenant Kelton called me over and said: 'I have an order to send the oldest non-com we've got to report to Regimental Headquarters, to go to an officers' school. You are the oldest and entitled to go.'

'When do I shove off?'

'It will be all right if you start right now.'

So I shook hands with him and Lieutenant Deming and a few of the other fellows and started back through the woods.

The German artillery was still banging away, but after a time the guns stopped and the woods grew strangely quiet. I could hear no more firing anywhere.

When night came, I saw many fires down in the valley, and I heard men singing. After a while I saw a fire in the woods not far from me, and I went over and found a bunch of fellows from the Fifth and Sixth Marines who were also on their way back to Langres to school.

I said, 'Isn't it rather close to the line to have fires?'

They yelled, 'For Christ's sake, don't you know the war's over?'

I said, 'The hell it is!'

'The hell it isn't! The armistice was on at eleven o'clock this morning . . . Listen! . . .'

Far off down in the valley a bugle was blowing 'Taps.'

AMEN

"The Books You Like to Read
at the Price You Like to Pay"

There Are Two Sides to Everything—

—including the wrapper which covers every Grosset & Dunlap book. When you feel in the mood for a good romance, refer to the carefully selected list of modern fiction comprising most of the successes by prominent writers of the day which is printed on the back of every Grosset & Dunlap book wrapper.

You will find more than five hundred titles to choose from—books for every mood and every taste and every pocketbook.

Don't forget the other side, but in case the wrapper is lost, write to the publishers for a complete catalog.

There is a Grosset & Dunlap Book
for every mood and for every taste

STIRRING
TALES OF THE GREAT WAR

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT..Erich Maria Remarque
The greatest of all the War novels. The G. & D. Edition is the unexpurgated edition—printed from the English text.

GOD HAVE MERCY ON US!.....William T. Scanlon
These were the words that instinctively came to the lips of hundreds of American soldiers who survived the experiences told in this book,

WAR BUGS.....Charles MacArthur
Leonard Nason says "If WAR BUGS is not a splendid picture of a 'milishy' outfit I'll bite my initials in a green bough."

THE CASE OF SERGEANT GRISCHA.....Arnold Zwieg
Based on an actual case during the European War—it is an impassioned and powerful drama of man's inhumanity to man.

THE TOP KICK.....Leonard Nason
Infantry, cavalry, artillery, intelligence—Private fights and public fights—Wine, no women, and cuss words—France in 1918.

SQUAD.....James B. Wharton
The war chronicle of eight men out of whose flesh and blood the smallest of military units—a squad—is made.

WAR BIRDS.....The Diary of an Unknown Aviator
Soaring, looping, zooming, spitting hails of leaden death, planes everywhere in a war darkened sky. WAR BIRDS is a tale of youth, loving, fighting, dying.

SERGEANT EADIE.....Leonard Nason
This is the private history of the hard luck sergeant whose exploits in CHEVRONS made that story one of the most dramatic and thrilling of war books.

WINGS.....John Monk Saunders
Based on the great Paramount picture, WINGS is the Big Parade of the air, the gallant, fascinating story of an American air pilot.

LEAVE ME WITH A SMILE.....Elliott White Springs
Henry Winton, a famous ace, thrice decorated, twice wounded and many times disillusioned returns after the war to meet Phyllis, one of the new order of hard-drinking, unmoral girls.

NOCTURNE MILITAIRE.....Elliott White Springs
War, with wine and women, tales of love, madness, heroism; flyers reckless in their gestures toward life and death.

CHEVRONS.....Leonard Nason
One of the sensations of the post-war period, CHEVRONS discloses the whole pageantry of war with grim truth flavored with the breezy vulgarity of soldier dialogue.

THREE LIGHTS FROM A MATCH.....Leonard Nason
Three long short stories, each told with a racy vividness, the real terror in war with the sputter of machine guns.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

B. M. BOWER'S NOVELS

May be bought wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list.

HAYWIRE

POINTS WEST

THE ADAM CHASERS

WHITE WOLVES

VAN PATTEN

BLACK THUNDER

DESERT BREW

THE BELLEHELEN MINE

THE EAGLE'S WING

THE VOICE AT JOHNNYWATER

CHIP OF THE FLYING U

FLYING U RANCH

FLYING U's LAST STAND

THE LONESOME TRAIL

THE LONG SHADOW

THE LURE OF THE DIM TRAILS

THE RANGE DWELLERS

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers, NEW YORK

THE NOVELS OF EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's list.

TARZAN, LORD OF THE JUNGLE
TARZAN OF THE APES
TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR
TARZAN AND THE ANT MEN
TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION
TARZAN THE TERRIBLE
TARZAN THE UNTAMED
THE BEASTS OF TARZAN
THE RETURN OF TARZAN
THE SON OF TARZAN
JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN
THE MASTER MIND OF MARS
THE PRINCESS OF MARS
THE WARLORD OF MARS
THE GODS OF MARS
THUVIA, MAID OF MARS
THE CHESSMAN OF MARS
THE MONSTER MEN
THE WAR CHIEF
THE OUTLAW OF TORN
THE MAD KING
THE MOON MAID
THE ETERNAL LOVER
THE CAVE GIRL
THE BANDIT OF HELL'S BEND
THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT
AT THE EARTH'S CORE
PELLUCIDAR
THE MUCKER

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

NOVELS OF FRONTIER LIFE

WILLIAM MacLEOD RAINE

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

THE FIGHTING TENDERFOOT
TEXAS MAN
COLORADO
JUDGE COLT
THE FIGHTING EDGE
GUNSIGHT PASS
TANGLED TRAILS
MAN SIZE
THE BIG TOWN ROUND-UP
OH, YOU TEX!
THE SHERIFF'S SON
A MAN FOUR SQUARE
A TEXAS RANGER
BRAND BLOTTERS
BUCKY O'CONNOR
MAVERICKS
BONANZA
RIDGEWAY OF MONTANA
WYOMING
A DAUGHTER OF THE DONS
THE HIGHGRADER
THE YUKON TRAIL
THE VISION SPLENDID
THE DESERT'S PRICE
IRONHEART
ROADS OF DOUBT
TROUBLED WATERS
CROOKED TRAILS AND STRAIGHT

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers, NEW YORK

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD'S
STORIES OF ADVENTURE

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

THE LADY OF PERIBONKA
THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM
SWIFT LIGHTNING
THE BLACK HUNTER
THE ANCIENT HIGHWAY
A GENTLEMAN OF COURAGE
THE ALASKAN
THE COUNTRY BEYOND
THE FLAMING FOREST
THE VALLEY OF SILENT MEN
THE RIVER'S END
THE GOLDEN SNARE
BACK TO GOD'S COUNTRY
THE WOLF HUNTER
THE GOLD HUNTERS
NOMADS OF THE NORTH
KAZAN
THE COURAGE OF CAPTAIN PLUM
BAREE, SON OF KAZAN
THE DANGER TRAIL
THE COURAGE OF MARGE O'DOONE
THE HUNTED WOMAN
THE FLOWER OF THE NORTH
THE GRIZZLY KING
ISOBEL

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

ZANE GREY'S NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

WILD HORSE MESA
NEVADA
FORLORN RIVER
UNDER THE TONTO RIM
THE VANISHING AMERICAN
TAPPAN'S BURRO
THE THUNDERING HERD
THE CALL OF THE CANYON
WANDERER OF THE WASTELAND
THE DAY OF THE BEAST
TO THE LAST MAN
THE MYSTERIOUS RIDER
THE MAN OF THE FOREST
THE DESERT OF WHEAT
THE U. P. TRAIL
WILDFIRE
THE BORDER LEGION
THE RAINBOW TRAIL
THE HERITAGE OF THE DESERT
RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE
LIGHT OF WESTERN STARS
THE LAST OF THE PLAINSMEN
THE LONE STAR RANGER
DESERT GOLD
BETTY ZANE

ZANE GREY'S BOOKS FOR BOYS

ROPING LIONS IN THE GRAND CANYON
THE RED-HEADED OUTFIELD
KEN WARD IN THE JUNGLE
THE YOUNG LION HUNTER
THE YOUNG FORESTER
THE YOUNG PITCHER
THE SHORT STOP

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

DETECTIVE STORIES BY J. S. FLETCHER

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

J. S. Fletcher's mystery detective stories of the puzzle variety have made him the generally acknowledged successor to Conan Doyle in this field.

THE WRIST MARK

COBWEB CASTLE

MURDER IN THE PALLANT

THE RAYNOR-SLADE AMALGAMATION

THE MAZAROFF MYSTERY

THE BLACK HOUSE IN HARLEY STREET

THE PASSENGER TO FOLKESTONE

MARCHESTER ROYAL

THE CARTWRIGHT GARDENS MURDER

EXTERIOR TO THE EVIDENCE

THE MISSING CHANCELLOR

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE MURDER

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers, NEW YORK

RAFAEL SABATINI'S NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

JESI, a diminutive city of the Italian Marches, was the birthplace of Rafael Sabatini.

He first went to school in Switzerland and from there to Lycee of Oporto, Portugal, and has never attended an English school. But English is hardly an adopted language for him, as he learned it from his mother, an English woman.

Today Rafael Sabatini is regarded as the "The Alexandre Dumas of Modern Fiction.

THE HOUNDS OF GOD

THE TAVERN KNIGHT

THE NUPTIALS OF CORBAL

BELLARION

THE SHAME OF MOTLEY

THE LION'S SKIN

THE GATES OF DOOM

THE TRAMPLING OF THE LILLIES

THE STROLLING SAINT

THE CAROLINIAN

MISTRESS WILDING

THE BANNER OF THE BULL

SAINT MARTIN'S SUMMER

FORTUNE'S FOOL

BARDELY'S THE MAGNIFICENT

THE SNARE

CAPTAIN BLOOD

THE SEA-HAWK

SCARAMOUCHE

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers, NEW YORK

JACKSON GREGORY'S NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's List.

SENTINEL OF THE DESERT

A fascinating story of mystery, adventure and love in the dangerous days of the old Southwest.

EMERALD TRAILS

Hard riding, reckless adventure—a story based upon the smuggling of jewels from the Orient through the redwoods of California.

REDWOOD AND GOLD

A romance of the Redwood forests and a fight for the control of an old ranch and the gold that is hidden on it.

CAPTAIN CAVALIER

A romance of Old California in the days of the Spanish Aristocracy.

A DESERT THOROUGHBRED

The thrilling adventures of Camilla Darrel across the Mexican border.

THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAIN

A thrilling story about a lovely girl who flees to the mountains to avoid an obnoxious suitor—and finds herself suspected of murder.

TIMBER WOLF

This is a story of action in the open, dominated by the heroic figure of Timber-Wolf.

THE EVERLASTING WHISPER

Tells of a strong man's struggle against savage nature and of a girl's regeneration from a spoiled child of wealth into a courageous, strong-willed woman.

MAN TO MAN

How Steve won his game and the girl he loved is a story filled with breathless situations.

THE BELLS OF SAN JUAN

Dr. Virginia Page is forced to go with the sheriff on a night journey into the strongholds of a lawless band.

JUDITH OF BLUE LAKE RANCH

Judith Sanford, part owner of a cattle ranch, realizes that she is being robbed by her foreman. With the help of Bud Lee she checkmates Trevor's scheme.

THE JOYOUS TROUBLE MAKER

A reporter sets up housekeeping close to Beatrice's ranch, much to her chagrin. There is another man who complicates matters.

SIX FEET FOUR

Beatrice Waverly is robbed of $5,000 and suspicion fastens upon Buck Thornton, but she soon realizes he is not guilty.

WOLF BREED

No Luck Brennan, a woman hater, finds a match in Ygerne, whose clever fencing wins the admiration and love of the "Lone Wolf."

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers, NEW YORK